

Durham Research Online

Deposited in DRO:

10 July 2013

Version of attached file:

Published Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Mughal, M. A. Z. (2012) 'Special Edition : RAT's First Annual Postgraduate Conference 2011.', Department of Anthropology, Durham University , Durham.

Further information on publisher's website:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropology.journal/vol18/iss2/DAJ-18-2.pdf>

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SPECIAL EDITION

RAI'S FIRST ANNUAL POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCE 2011



Frying Samosas in Lodhran, Pakistan. Photo credit: © Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal

General Editor
Claudia Merli

Guest Editor
Muhammad
Aurang Zeb Mughal

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General editor's note

Claudia Merli, Durham University

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/merli2012.pdf>

This special issue of DAJ presents a selection of articles submitted by panellists at the Royal Anthropological Institute's First Annual Postgraduate Conference, hosted by the Department of Anthropology, Durham University on 20 September 2011. The conference organisation committee was chaired by Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal, assisted by Carla S. Handley and Erika McClure, and supported by Dr Stephen M. Lyon in the role of advisor. The conference was the first in a series of Post Graduate conferences covering all sub-disciplines of anthropology, for initiative of the Royal Anthropological Institute. This issue is the first of two devoted to the conference, and has Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal as guest editor. It presents five selected articles and a research note from the conference. It also offers to its readers a comment penned by David Zeitlyn and Stephen M. Lyon on 'Varieties of openness and types of digital anthropology: Avoiding confusion in discussing Danny Miller', which contributes to the current debate on open access academic journals and publications, and their related policies. The issue also hosts a book reviews section with reviews prepared by Sidra Khalid, Dori Beeler and Michele F. Fontefrancesco.

Guest editorial

RAI's First Annual Postgraduate Conference, September 20, 2011, Department of Anthropology, Durham University

Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal, Durham University

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/mughal2012.pdf>

Durham University hosted the Royal Anthropological Institute's First Annual Postgraduate Conference, held on September 20, 2011. The conference not only provided an opportunity for the postgraduate students at various universities across the UK to present their papers but also to know what RAI has to offer them in order to enhance the quality and exposure of their researches (Handley et al. 2012). Since this was the first conference by the RAI at postgraduate level appealing all sub-disciplines of anthropology, no particular theme was proposed. For this reason, the conference happened to be a 'collage' of a variety of themes and issues in which British anthropology is contemporarily engaged in at home and overseas. When I shared the idea of publishing the conference papers as a special issue with Dr. Claudia Merli, DAJ's General Editor, and Dr Stephen M. Lyon, Conference Advisor and DAJ's former General Editor, they happily agreed. They also encouraged the participants to publish their researches, and answered their queries about how to publish journals during a session at the conference dedicated on publishing in anthropology. This special issue, as the first episode of this conference publication, offers six papers. Although there is no common focus of these papers just as there was not any at the conference, these involve the topics related to ethics, health, gender, identity, vulnerabilities, and human rights. There is, however, a common thread of policy-oriented research along most of these papers. I will now briefly introduce these papers to highlight the main topics these are dealing with.

In her paper, Rachel Douglas-Jones shows concerns about, what she refers to as, the international regime of biomedical research. Through the analogy of a broken thread in a finely woven silk cloth, she examines the threats and perceptions involved in working of ethics review committees in Asia. She presents an example of the NGO that works to build the capacity of research ethics committees in the Asian region. Her paper also analyses the discussions at and after a conference on ethics in health research, and suggests how the perceived “gaps” are related to the notion of “trust” (Jiménez 2011).

Anthropological research on HIV/AIDS initially dealt with the behavioural aspects in transmission of the disease. Contemporarily, anthropology is engaged in social inequalities and political economy linked with HIV/AIDS (Parker 2001; Chaudhary 2010). In the second paper, Caitlin O’Grady describes the stories and experiences of HIV-positive women in North London. She discusses the exclusion of women from designated “at-risk” groups within the policy decisions and public awareness campaigns due to the stigma and discrimination attached to HIV. The paper treats such issues in a broader anthropological and philosophical discourse involving the structural violence, and modern social imagery (Farmer 2004; Foucault 1990; Gramsci 1970). By analysing this gendered dimension of the policies for HIV, the author is in favour of shifting the policy on “at risk groups” to a general focus on risk behaviour.

Different communities all over the world have different attitudes towards social change depending upon their cultural sensitivities, local and international political dynamics, and mechanism of the change being taken place (Inglehart, and Baker 2000; Mughal 2008). Anthropology of South Asia has peculiar approaches to power and conflict over the ownership of land in rural and tribal societies (Lyon 2004; Aufschnaiter 2009). The third paper in this issue is penned by Amy Hannington. This paper offers an analysis of change and resistance in Orissa, India. The study presents the Dongria Kond-Vedanta struggle over the mining of the bauxite rich tops of the Niyamgiri range. Hannington shows how the Dongria Kond beliefs and practices helped gaining the attention of international media, NGOs and ecologists to an endangered sacred mountain.

Shuhua Chen explains in her paper the practices of home making on move by the Chinese migrant labourers focusing on the Southeast Asian Emigration from 1860 to 1949. She asserts that the migrant population's ways of constructing homes during their journeys are influenced by the nostalgia associated with the past. She uses the family remittance letters written by these migrant labourers to their families back home for analysing the home making practices. This paper shows the emotional association of migrants with their homes and discusses the concept of home, identity, and migration through a methodological innovation. In this regard, it contributes to anthropology of space - the space that is entrenched in home, migration, border, identity, and body (Cieraad 1999; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Abid 2009).

Bowen Wei's paper discusses the issues related to homosexuals in sports communities. While presenting the example of a Rugby club in Edinburgh, he explains how Rugby is associated with the notions of manhood, masculinity, male domination and power. The paper explains the stigma attached to homosexual behaviour, which curtails the socialisation of gays in the local community. He argues that the Rugby gay players want to "re-merge" with the local community at an 'equal' status. Analysing the issues related to human rights is an important framework through which anthropology deals with the policy (Messer 1993). There are different problems and issues in human societies, which are dealt under the umbrella term of human rights. These include, but not limited to, crimes, gender violence, child labour, corruption, reproductive rights, minority rights, and racism. In her research note, Fiona Hukula presents a different dimension of gender violence in Papua New Guinea by analysing every day talk to describe the ways in which people labelled the behaviours of being male and female. Criticising the approach of human rights NGOs on gender and violence, she is in dialogue with a general understanding towards this issue, which involves the ideas of male dominance, modernity and power relations in the cultural context. She attempts to suggest alternative views on the issue of gender and violence through the framework of relationality.

I am hopeful that the readers will find all the papers informative, engaging, and innovative in their approaches and treatments of the issues they are dealing with.

Acknowledgements

Taking this opportunity, I would like to say thanks to all those people who have been helpful in organising this conference as well as preparing this special issue. I would like to extend my thanks to Professor Bob Simpson, Head of the Department of Anthropology, for his support to organise this conference. I am indebted to Dr Stephen M. Lyon for his guidance and continued support in organising the conference and preparing this special issue. I am very thankful to Dr Claudia Merli who encouraged the proposal for this special issue and provided her support as General Editor of the Durham Anthropology Journal. I would like to pay thanks to Erika McClure and Carla Handley for their valuable support as co-conveners of this conference and help in preparing this special issue. I also appreciate the assistance provided by the RAI team especially Susanne Hammacher (Film Officer), Nafisa Fera (Education and Communication Officer), and Amanda Vinson (Office and Membership Manager) in making this conference a successful event. I am also thankful to all the participants at the conference. I am grateful to Dalia Iskander, Maurice Said, Mwenza Blell, Fiaz Ahmed, Claudia Aufschnaiter, Tom Yarrow, Zobaida Nasreen, and Michele Fontefrancesco for their comments on the papers and helping with the editorial process. My special thanks go for the support staff (especially Kate Payne, Judith Manghan, and John Foster), faculty members, and all my colleagues at the Department of Anthropology for their support. Durham University's Graduate School deserves a special appreciation for providing necessary logistic support in organising the conference.

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A single broken thread

Integrity, trust and accountability in Asian ethics review committees

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/douglas-jones2012.pdf>

Abstract

In exploring the work and role of ethics review committees in Asia, this paper takes as its starting point an image of a finely woven silk cloth. The image was used at an international conference to describe the ‘matrix’ of persons and institutions involved in biomedical research, with the implication that broken threads threatened the integrity of research endeavours. In what follows, I examine two points at which breaks in the cloth are perceived, and the work done to ‘bridge’ the resulting gaps. Drawing on fieldwork with a capacity building NGO that works to build the competence of research ethics committees in the Asian region, I show how the image can be used to understand the place of ethics as a contemporary concern in research settings.

Keywords

Asia, research ethics, capacity building, trust

How do images of order, cooperation, stability or vulnerability travel? This paper looks at the expression of concerns about the international regime of biomedical research, focusing on the role given to, and taken by, ethics review committees. The ‘single broken thread’ of my title is taken from a presentation given in 2008 by American anaesthesiologist and ethics commentator Dr. Greg Koski at an International Conference on ‘Empowering Stakeholders in Health Research: Towards Developing an Ethics of Responsibility’ in

Bangkok, Thailand. The conference was one of several I attended during my doctoral fieldwork, on capacity building in research ethics in the Asian region, between 2009 and 2010. The conference at which Dr. Koski spoke was hosted and run by the NGO I focused on: the Forum of Ethics Review Committees of Asia and the Pacific, or FERCAP. Funded primarily by the World Health Organization's Tropical Disease Research arm, the Forum employs two staff based in offices on the Thammasat University Campus, in the northern reaches of Bangkok. Each year, the Forum runs training sessions and implements a Recognition Program for members of ethics review committees, seeking to improve the quality and efficacy of biomedical review in the Asian region. The Recognition Program uses the protocols of the Strategic Initiative in Developing Capacity in Ethical Review (SIDCER), which began as a WHO/TDR collaborative initiative bringing together regional fora concerned with ethical review.¹ In addition, FERCAP organise an annual conference, working with their members across the region who assist with finding venues and accommodation for several hundred delegates. The conferences are a focal point in FERCAP's calendar, bringing together ethics committee members from the various countries in which FERCAP operates.² They were also key sites for anthropological fieldwork.

During his talk at the 2008 conference, Dr. Koski projected a slide containing the following text to his audience:

The individuals and entities engaged in human research constitute a matrix of overlapping roles and responsibilities that together serve to ensure that the duties are satisfied. This matrix is like a finely woven silk cloth. A single broken thread causes a defect, a single defect spoils an entire cloth. A single hole can result in disaster, a single disaster can shred the fabric of trust. It is

¹ For further details on the structure and organisation of SIDCER, a public-private initiative originating in the World Health Organisation Tropical Disease Research Arm, see http://www.sidcer.org/new_web/index.php (accessed December 12, 2012)

² As of 2011, these countries included Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand.

our duty to protect not just research subjects, but to protect the integrity of science itself. (Greg Koski, FERCAP Conference Powerpoint, 2008)³

What interests me in this quote from Dr. Koski's talk is what the image of a 'finely woven silk cloth' assumes about the interaction between 'parts' of biomedical research. I am also interested in how the image betrays the concerns that drive it: the place of science in contemporary life, the role of ethics in securing that position. The vulnerability of the single broken thread is revealed through reference to entirety, a holistic image of interconnected causality. It recalls the French nursery rhyme used by Callon and Latour (1981: 296) to explore problems of micro-macro framings: 'The cat knocks over the pot, the pot knocks over the table, the table knocks over the room, the room knocks over the house, the house knocks over the street, the street knocks over Paris: Paris, Paris has fallen!' Both 'Paris' and 'Science' stand as 'large' things, made suddenly vulnerable. In an era of increasingly globalised drug trials, where arguments about the efficacy of chemicals on the body are woven of data from multiple sources, problems of oversight abound, and 'disaster' can lead to scandal. While regulators have paid detailed attention to standardisation as a mechanism in the production of reliable, comparable, 'trustworthy' data, they have also sought to ensure that research conducted is uniformly ethical. Ethics, then, has become part of the apparatus that contributes to the validity of studies, integrated through industry standards such as International Conference on Harmonization's Good Clinical Practice (ICH GCP-E6)—a process-based document which combines scientific, medical and ethical principles. The ethics committee is the entity charged with assessing the ethics of studies, and through this function, it is formulated as a link in the 'matrix' of scientific knowledge-making. Dr. Koski's image of a fabric allows for many threads, and many gaps between those threads. What if, rather than looking for the threads—of which we can doubtless come up with many—we look at the gaps between the threads, the nature of the gaps and the forms of management that are brought in to govern them?

³ Empowering Stakeholders in Health Research : Defining Stakeholder Responsibilities Toward Implementing a Duty-Based Ethics. Greg Koski, PhD. MD. Harvard Medical School. 8th FERCAP Conference, 2008.

This proposal to talk of gaps (and the things that aim to fill them) rather than threads requires a little theoretical positioning. Dr. Koski's image builds from a 'single broken thread' towards a shredded fabric of trust. Trust is widely acknowledged as a contemporary 'problem', discussed by an enormous range of people, academics included. Within analytical discourses, it builds on late twentieth-century concerns with risk (Giddens 1990; Beck 1992; Douglas and Wildavski 1982) and Alberto Corsín Jiménez has recently pointed to the way in which the idea of trust has become entrenched in not only political but also sociological discourses. 'Everybody', he says, 'talks about trust these days' (Jiménez 2011: 177). He is talking about it too but the intention in his paper is not to add to the growing literature which takes trust as its organising device, replacing 'class' or 'gender' to spin stories of the consequences of its absence. His interest lies in the reasons for its current political centrality.

Dr. Koski is part of Corsín Jiménez's 'everybody', speaking in his presentation about the trust that medical regulators worry about, the trust sought by governments, and most particularly, the trust in science feared lost by 'publics'. It is a trust that, at its mention, is always lacking, or about to be absent: a vulnerability or fragile future, rolled out in a display of robust knowledge (Strathern 2005). Trust has also been imbricated in a number of contemporary forms of governance, such as audit, transparency and accountability, forms which seek to bridge the gaps a perceived absence of trust opens up. For the biomedical research world, where the production of information through clinical trials requires reliable data, it is ethics which comes to be regarded as a way through which studies can be governed. Since the emergence of bioethics in the USA and UK during the late 1970s and 1980s (Wilson 2010, 2011), ethics has also been thought of as a way in which the public trust, which Dr. Koski fears lost, can be rebuilt. To employ Dr. Koski's image, it works in the 'gaps' between the threads, it comes to be a form of knowledge and management which organises and assesses what research will take place. Jiménez argues that 'the way the languages of information, risk and trust have been brought to bear on the reorganisation of our knowledge institutions can be adumbrated in new and original ways by the toolkit of the anthropologist' (2011: 186). In what follows, I attempt to take up this suggestion, using Dr. Koski's image of a cloth as a starting point for the examination of two entities from

which ‘integrity’ and ‘accountability’ are required. I look first at how the ethics committee, designed as an auditable, decision-making device, can come to be cast as a fraying thread, not through negligence but by over-enthusiasm. I shall turn then to a training session for ethics review committee members, in which the idea of ‘Conflict of Interest’ becomes caught up in problems of invisibility. I ask what the idea of Conflict of Interest reveals about that which it is brought in to manage. Together, the examples convey insight into the (re)organisation of knowledge institutions, and offer a reflection on the means by which concepts gain purchase through practice.

The Ethics Review Committee

An Ethics Review Committee is a group of people who come together on a regular basis to discuss ethical considerations of biomedical protocols submitted to them. Often attached to an academic institute or a hospital, these committees comprise practicing clinicians, researchers, a sprinkling of lawyers, laypersons and sometimes patients. In the Asian region where FERCAP works, members of committees are almost exclusively volunteers, who receive either nothing or a small honorarium for their time and effort. Often, they operate in the absence of national legislation. Perhaps their country is new to clinical trials, or inundated with them. Perhaps their legal system has been weighted by lobbyists or war. Whatever the national legislative situation, FERCAP, as a regional capacity building organisation, adapts its training and advice.

One of FERCAP’s key activities is a ‘recognition’ program, which began in 2005. This program begins with a self-assessment by a committee, followed by a visit from FERCAP Surveyors. Using the program set out by the Strategic Initiative in Developing Capacity in Ethical Review (SIDCER), surveys check five key areas of committee work, emphasising those deemed essential and set about putting a system of review in place. During the time of my research, a common recommendation was that committees take greater care in following up on studies they had approved. Of the view that committees thought their job was done once the review had been conducted, the survey teams sought to ensure that review was ‘continuing’. This meant putting conditions on the certificate of ethical

approval, such as requests for annual reports, perhaps limiting (through a date stamp) the validity of the approval so the study would have to be re-reviewed annually, even running occasional site visits. As continuing review became something by which the committee's own quality and capabilities were judged in order to be trusted itself, the committee was encouraged to operate as though it did not trust its researchers (see Power 1997).

Of the new markers of continuing review, it was the site visits that caused something of a problem during an afternoon session of the 2010 FERCAP conference in Shanghai. Dr. Dipika, a microbiologist from Mumbai was presenting a new scheme that her committee had pioneered. It was highly comprehensive, requiring dedicated members from the committee to familiarise themselves with the documents for a trial, go to the site, meet the Principal Investigator, observe consent processes, look at consent forms, and check thoroughly that everything was in order. She listed 'violations' that her monitors had found as a result of this new procedure, and the assembled audience—most of whom were committee members themselves—knew these findings were serious. One might have expected the ensuing question and answer session to address the many cases of non-compliance she had found or speculate on what could be done to improve the situation. But the discussion after her talk took an entirely different turn: we talked about whether she and her committee should have been monitoring in the first place. The trainers and coordinators of FERCAP were, in a diplomatic way, carefully disapproving, suggesting that the clinical monitors employed by the sponsors should be the ones to do the 'monitoring'.

Dr. Dipika could not really see the reason for the complaints from the floor. To her, these activities were the *responsibility* of the committee. Indeed, she evidently regarded this new activity as a virtuous sacrifice of time on the part of the volunteer members to go that extra step further towards ensuring 'human subject protection'. She had doubted whether researchers were able to follow the protocol they had submitted, and whether they respected the decision of the committee and the changes it had requested. She had found in her investigations that they did not. Had she not proven that doubt was justified? Now that she had shown that researchers could not be trusted to do what they had promised the committee, was greater vigilance not required? Surely her initiative improved the system,

made her committee perform better, and increased both the trustworthiness of the data coming out of the trials and, by extension, the committee itself?

The opposite seemed to be true. Her new system meant that the committee had overstepped their role within another system: the international system in which FERCAP was working to include Asian Ethics Review committees. In attempting to pay attention to the ‘single broken threads’ under her nose—an unsigned consent form or the “impartial” witness actually employed as part of the trial—Dr. Dipika was (to the international audience gathered in Shanghai) at risk herself of becoming a broken thread in the system, a committee overstepping its jurisdiction.

Committee Members

As Dr. Dipika’s dedication to the cause demonstrates, ‘belief’ in ethics is an important dimension in its spread and uptake. While FERCAP members state that ‘belief’ is important, how does one come to believe? During a workshop in Thailand, Dr. Juntra, a leading trainer, explained the logo⁴ used by FERCAP as ‘the flame of enlightenment’. To her, it encapsulated perfectly the way in which ethics was simultaneously an international system of committees and a state of mind. ‘It’s the same as when you change your paradigm’, she told me, ‘[ethics] may be obvious for some people, but others can’t see it until they cross that line’. We were sitting opposite one another around a table at the workshop, and she put her hands on her laptop screen that formed a barrier between us. ‘It’s hard to explain when you don’t cross, when you’re on this side. However much I tell you, it doesn’t mean anything until you cross the line’. I must have expressed bemusement, because she continued with another example:

Do you ride a bicycle? You ride a bicycle. Before, why [was it] so hard? Do you remember that first time? That moment, the first time you ride the bike, you remember. That’s why I try to find examples. What does it mean when

⁴ The logo, a vertical flame shape, red at the base and yellow at the tip is visible at <http://www.fercap-sidcer.org/index.php> (accessed December 19, 2012)

you can't do it, you can't do it, you can't do it, then you suddenly can do [it].
Take that moment.

Some trainings were thought to produce this effect more than others. Speaking to trainers of a workshop on the basics of research ethics, Dr. Juntra warned them that at the beginning their participants would not care. 'Then they start to listen,' she said. 'It's one of the most transformative [trainings]. At the beginning they do not care, then they hear... You see them change.'

Sometimes, doing ethics well meant changing how you thought, not just about ethics but also about yourself. Conflict of Interest was a topic usually introduced during trainings. It was described most simply as the practice of ensuring that time was made at the beginning of committee meetings to check whether members had financial or 'personal' conflicts with the protocols under discussion that day. In April 2010, I attended two FERCAP surveys and several trainings in the Philippine capital of Manila. On the opening day of the survey, Cecilia, a chair of various national health boards, explained to the FERCAP surveyors and trainees some of the challenges of conducting ethical review in her country. Closing a section on 'obstacles', she lamented that in the Philippines, '[w]e do not understand or easily recognise conflicts of interest':

One time, we had a member in the national ethics committee, a very respected researcher who was also a head of a health institution. He said, 'I think our health institution should be exempted from ethics review because we've been doing research for so long'. I said 'OK bye!' So it's not very clear yet what this is all about. Since we do not recognise conflicts of interest, we do not manage [them].

In dismissing the 'respected researcher', Cecilia rejected his suggestion that he be exempted on the grounds of experience. Both researchers and institutions had to adapt to the changes brought about by GCP and research ethics: neither seniority nor experience⁵ now provided cover from ethics committee evaluation.

⁵ Indeed, more senior researchers were more inclined to do things 'as they always had', leading to concern about their compliance with GCP and 'new' ethical standards.

As the amount of internationally sponsored research increased, so did attendance at trainings on international standards, run by the University of the Philippines. In the week following the survey, I joined some forty or fifty attendees in lecture theatre of the College of Medicine to observe these lectures on Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and research ethics. Dr. Rodriguez's lecture on Conflict of Interest (COI) echoed the concern that it was something 'difficult to see'. Rodriguez, a Professor of Legal Medicine and Ethics at the School of Law, put a good deal of effort into explaining what the many permutations of COI might look like, in order that it could be spotted. He opened his lecture with a reflection on why a lecture on COI was necessary:

Ok, first a reality check. We all know the benefits of engaging into a liaison between researchers and the funding agency, and most of the time it's [the] pharmaceutical industry, those manufacturing medical devices, equipment etc. So we all know the benefit we get from this. The problem nowadays is there is this perception of growing relationship or ties with this industry. Practically everything you do now you see a sponsor a multinational corporation funding the researchers.

Taking the financial entanglements in the growing research industry as his starting point, Rodriguez left the 'perception' implicit, choosing not to explain why a 'growing relationship' might be problematic. Translating his abstract concern about 'ties' into an example, Rodriguez moved from researchers and their funders to committees evaluating research, keeping financial concerns central:

In the US, all members make a declaration about their investment. They think anything over \$10,000, in WIRB⁶ [is a conflict]. [When discussing a Pfizer funded protocol] [t]hose with stocks in Pfizer have to leave the room. That's how they look at COI. That's their policy, let's say you're consultant of Pharma, last year you received \$12,000. That's a significant conflict of interest. That's how they manage it. In the US, it was said that the \$10,000 is a minuscule, a negligible amount. But here in the Philippines

⁶ Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB), based in Olympia, Washington State, USA has had significant interaction with FERCAP and ethics committees in the Asian region through its WHO funded Developing Countries Training Program.

\$10,000 US dollars is really something, so we came up with a rate of 450,000 pesos or something.

Converting US dollars to Philippine pesos was an attempt to evaluate the amount of money that would cause an ‘undue influence’. Things got more complicated however, as money, Rodriguez told us, was the ‘only tangible thing in the array of secondary interests. It’s always easy to address it because it’s there, you see it.’ If money was ‘tangible’, other things were less so. Interests thought of as invisible required different forms and degrees of self-awareness. ‘We think of COI in terms of your perception’ counselled Rodriguez:

You are an ethical individual and therefore you cannot do anything wrong. But that’s not the definition of COI. COI means that you are ethical [and] at the same time you recognise you have a different role and a different interest.

Recognising these different roles and interests meant being aware of ‘secondary’ interests—and with this, we entered the realm of the intangible. ‘We cannot come up with a researcher without conflict of interest’, Rodriguez told us. ‘Life desires to have fame. How do we measure that desire?’ Secondary interests applied as much to researchers as to ethics review committee members, and the line between the two was regularly blurred. Institutional review boards were attached to faculties and the knowledge that brought committee members to their ‘expert’ role on the IRB was also the knowledge that made it problematic. If they knew the field of cancer, for example, it was also likely that they knew those who worked on cancer in their institute and, even in the case of anonymised protocols, would be able to deduce whose protocol was under review. While their knowledge of the topic was desirable, their social knowledge was less so. Rodriguez described this interpersonal proximity as ‘bias’:

There is always this tendency of bias, when you talk about a committee who are all barkadas⁷ of the one conducting the research. You know our culture, Philipinos. Our barkadas, as medical students we are a close group, close

⁷ A Filipino slang word for a group of friends or peers (with thanks to Arthur (Atoy) Navarro for his translation).

friends there who went thorough thick and thin all throughout. ‘Hey, this is a proposal from Dr so-and-so. And I’m the one reviewing it’ So there is always this tension.

Participants in the training were encouraged to think about what conflicts of interest they might have. The lecturer reassured them: ‘half the problem is solved if the presence is recognised’, he said. Having listed various potential conflicts of interest—with conflict itself understood as ‘potential for bias or wrongdoing’—disclosure was introduced as the next step. ‘Failure to disclose is wrong’, Rodriguez announced, calling disclosure:

[t]he cornerstone of the Conflict of Interest guidelines and regulations. You can keep [a conflict] to yourself, but you will be taking a risk because once it's discovered or if a third party discloses it, then you are in deep trouble. In the US it is a very big thing because I think the regulation carries a penal clause, meaning they can give a penalty. It's not only a concept of ‘Hey, what you did was wrong’, there is a penalty involved when you fail to disclose. Unless institutions are informed of this relationship, they cannot identify Conflict of Interest or [take] additional steps needed reduce the risk of bias or loss of public trust. So Conflict of Interest must be disclosed. It's imperative that all clinical researchers would have this openness when it comes to Conflict of Interest. You simply cannot hide one or two and disclose the rest because eventually it will be discovered. That is a requirement that you alone can perform. To disclose it. If it comes from a third party you are in deep trouble. So you might as well start by disclosing it.

According to Rodriguez then, the revelation of conflicts of interest required ‘discipline’, as there was ‘no other way for others to know’ if one was harbouring a conflict of interest around the table at the committee meeting. This sort of discipline, the revelation of internally held knowledge of relationships external to the committee, meant committee members were told they could not ‘be silent’, but had to ‘manage’ their conflicts ‘pre-emptively’.

It is evident why, when given such scope, it was difficult for Cecilia and her colleagues to identify what conflicts of interest were, and what theirs might be. In what Dr. Rodriguez

spelled out to the researchers, we see revealed tacit assumptions in the international documents on conflict of interest that do not hold in the Philippines. The state of ‘conflict of interest’ can be made to appear through a moment of revelation. It has the potential to not only jeopardise the ‘objectivity’ of a researcher, but also cast doubt upon the research enterprise itself. For a committee, it requires thinking of people as already related as individual committee members or researchers have their relationships, and thus their potential conflicts, ‘built in’. In the USA, committees must trust their members—or compel them—to reveal something they are assumed to be already aware of. Cecilia and Dr. Rodriguez indicate that there is a need for a double revelation to make the principles and protocols of Conflict of Interest meaningful and effective in the Philippines. A ‘conflict’ must first become apparent to the individual subject, through practices of self-knowledge and analysis; that subject can then reveal the content of that revelation to others. Given the need for this double revelation, ethics committee members must trust one another not only to reveal their conflicts, but also to have successfully revealed to themselves what it is that needs to be revealed to others. In this take on how members’ relationships outside the committee come to be constitutive of the trustworthiness of the committee as a unit, members are problematising concealment and revelation for the duration of the meeting as a moral act that only the individual member is capable of performing.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this paper, I proposed to look at the ‘gaps’ perceived to open up when trust was thought to be lacking, and the mechanisms which are brought in to bridge them. The SIDCER Recognition Survey implemented by FERCAP is one of these mechanisms. In providing a means to measure committees and a ‘mode of accountability regarding the quality and effectiveness of ethical review worldwide’ (FERCAP 2012) it also encourages an ethos of voluntarism through the principles of ‘duty based ethics’. While FERCAP’s pursuit of this goal took the ordinary-looking form of training, standard operating procedures, document examinations and interviews, it also depended on and cultivated certain kinds of ethical subjects and virtues. Indeed, it was through careful

management of this dedication that the network could draw upon volunteer members, survey teams and trainers.

FERCAP's work is thus directed specifically towards people like Dr. Dipika, who is clearly convinced. In response to criticism from the conference, she presented her own diligence in after-review monitoring as being in line with the 'duty-based' ethics advocated for by FERCAP—resulting from a sense of 'responsibility' in both herself and her committee. She had opened her talk with a quote that positioned ethics as 'not definable' and 'not implementable' because it was 'not conscious': '[Ethics] involves not only our thinking but also our feeling,' she said. This orientation suggests that one's personal ethics become folded into the capacity building of biomedical ethics, and capacity becomes at once a self-formation and the performance of an externally defined role. So, again, why were her activities, which clearly expose researchers not complying with the recommendations of the committee, so widely questioned? It would seem she had made the system work better by developing a mechanism to detect problems, yet it appears the reverse is true. Whereas committees cannot be trusted if they do not exhibit the right amount of mistrust in their researchers, Dr. Dipika was a danger because she did not keep her mistrust in check, keeping the activities of ethics committees within certain bounds. That she was overstepping these bounds publicly also required checking, in the sense that it required both attention, and censure. As her suspicion escalated the procedures of control and monitoring, she had overstepped the otherwise invisible bounds between 'site visits' and 'monitoring'—the latter being reserved for other actors in the 'cloth' of scientific knowledge making.

What the Conference's reaction to her presentation starts to reveal is a tension between the 'duty-based', 'virtuous' side of FERCAP's approach to capacity building in ethics, and the role of ethics and ethics committees as defined in the emergent 'system' it was trying to establish. Given the conference setting and the presence of committees from across the region and overseas representatives, the commentators on Dr. Dipika's 'monitoring' scheme felt the need to make clear to the assembly that they understood the roles of ethics committees under GCP—the perceived danger (and tension in the room) was that Dr.

Dipika's revelations not only made the region seem a dubious site for research, but that the capacity being built to manage the problems was problematic in itself. The challenge faced by FERCAP, then, is not just encouraging researchers to ensure ethics is taken seriously in their institutions, and ethical issues such as COI are 'seen' properly, but also managing (and checking) the zeal it inspires in those who adopt an affective, duty-based relationship to the cause. When someone considering the system speaks of a thread that breaks, they speak of an inadequate ethics committee, and FERCAP's implementation of the Survey is a means of setting it right. However, the systems cannot measure everything. As clinical monitors seek to make committees accountable, committees seek to make their researchers responsible. When a committee considers its threads, it takes into account the behaviour of its committee members and its researchers.

Returning to Dr. Koski's conference image, then, the image of the cloth addresses itself to each person who considers themselves part of the system. That the 'single broken thread' can be as much the committee as the person on that committee reveals the effectiveness of Dr. Koski's image. Its power lies in the abstracting possibilities it carries. With the single broken threads, its spoiling defects, its disasters and their trust-shredding consequences, the image can hop domains. Scaling up, science itself was considered to be at stake in the breaking of the thread of ethics. It is an image that works (and does its work), I suggest, because it shares characteristics with other images used to think about science and society. These images—indeed science and society themselves—are disaggregative; they are thought of as full of gaps. When ethics - in the form of committees, their discussions and their practices - come to be positioned in the science-society gap, as it is in Dr. Koski's image, the pressure is high. . An anthropological response, rather than finding out how to secure trust or improve ethics (as FERCAP perhaps wished I was doing), might be to probe how trust-based language and its resulting social forms affect what people do and the way they think about one another. Thus while Dr. Koski's image opens onto a world of concerns about trust and the architecture of the relationship between science and society, it is far more his world than of his audience in Chiangmai. In the image of the cloth, I argue, we find not only order and stability, but vulnerability. Here I have used the ethics committee and the trainings of its members as the social form through which the effect of

trust based language is felt in the making of biomedical knowledge. It is an example of an ethnographic examination of the tools which result from the concerns revealed in Dr. Koski's image, and a contribution to the work being done by anthropologists as they proceed towards comparative studies of contemporary ethical forms.

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“Swept under the rug”

Illness experiences of HIV-positive women in North London

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropology.journal/vol18/iss2/ogrady2012.pdf>

Abstract

This research sought to examine the illness experiences of HIV-positive women in North London, and their opinions on the exclusion of women from designated ‘at-risk’ groups within policy decisions and public awareness campaigns. For some, the impact had been negative with little awareness prior to diagnosis and a lack of support afterward. Others pointed to the benefits of not being stereotyped. These opinions were examined through in-depth semi-structured interviews with a small group of women, all of whom are members of a national HIV-positive support group. These one-on-one discussions focused on awareness prior to diagnosis, incidences of stigma and discrimination, and gender-based difficulties relating to HIV status. The results found that the majority of participants felt that, as women, they had different concerns and obstacles compared to their male counterparts, which primarily resulted from their role within the family, financial difficulties, and cultural expectations of female behaviour.

Keywords

HIV/AIDS, modern social imaginaries, HIV-positive women, at-risk groups, public sphere

Introduction

Living with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (hereafter as HIV) involves more than living with a medical condition as individuals face socio-political stigma on a daily basis. This is especially true within the United Kingdom where the approach to the epidemic continues to designate particular at-risk communities, such as men who have sex with men

and intravenous drug users, rather than acknowledging HIV as an issue for the general public. This research aims to go beyond the medical aspects of the epidemic in order to assess the illness experience in the daily lives of HIV-positive women living in North London. Emerging from participant data is an image of HIV as a condition, which has been ‘swept under the rug’, ignored by the general public and isolated by the government.

HIV/AIDS is a complex condition to study. As the global pandemic has grown and changed over the last thirty years, researchers from diverse fields have taken on the challenge. As a result, I consulted a variety of sources in order to formulate a theoretical approach to this research. These range from epidemiological and historical studies of victimology and the different viral strains of HIV; anthropological approaches including critical medical anthropology and structural violence; to philosophical theories such as those involving the modern social imaginary and official discourse (Farmer 2004; Foucault 1990; Fox 1986; Gramsci 1970; Hymes et al. 1981; Strathern 1988; Taylor 2002). In addition, the pandemic itself has changed as fewer HIV-positive individuals see their condition progress to AIDS due to improved medications. The change in status involves the level of white blood cells, or CD4 count, in the body. Once this number drops below two hundred, the individual is classified as having AIDS and is then particularly vulnerable to opportunistic infections. As a comparison, a normal CD4 count is usually in the range of six hundred to twelve hundred (AVERT 2011).

The most important theoretical distinction within this research involves the separation between a disease and an illness. This division is important within the study of HIV/AIDS because it allows for different approaches to the epidemic. A ‘disease’ is defined as something a physician diagnoses and treats based on physical symptoms. An ‘illness’, in contrast, is centred on the patient’s experience of the condition (Radley 1994: 3). The different ways of approaching HIV, either as a disease or illness, can create varied results. The premise of this research is that the current official approach to HIV, demonstrated by the authoritative discourse of the state and the National Health System, is to treat the disease rather than the illness. This in turn ignores the complex social and cultural issues brought on by diagnosis (Sontag 1989: 16). By treating the condition as an illness, the

individual and their needs become the priority rather than that of the virus and medication.

For example, Ruby, 44, shared her experience of trying to discuss difficulties with her early medication with her general practitioner. She had been placed on a drug regimen that, although it had kept her in good health, was extremely disruptive to her daily life with up to 18 pills a day, most of which had to be taken in different settings such as before meals, with meals, after meals and so on.

When she asked if there was something she could do that would be less intrusive, her doctor expressed confusion over why she would want to change her successful therapy and essentially made her feel she was focusing on the wrong elements of her condition. Through her involvement with a support group, she was able to get advice from other HIV-positive individuals and, in turn, was able to ask for specific medications, which lessened the pill burden.

In addition to the issue of patient experience this example demonstrates, the official approach inadvertently ignores other non-medical aspects of the condition such as the difficulties created by social stigma fed by public misinformation. By choosing to focus entirely on HIV as an illness, this research sought to understand the experience of HIV-positive women and the obstacles they face.

HIV/AIDS in the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has a low rate of HIV infections when compared to global statistics. With 86,500 HIV-positive individuals in 2010, the most recent yearly data available, the United Kingdom appears to have successfully controlled the local epidemic (AVERT 2011). However, in 2008, heterosexual transmission was identified in almost half of the HIV diagnoses while the infection rate for women continued to grow. For example, in 2007, the most recent year for gender specific data in the United Kingdom, women made up 22,000 of the 77,000 HIV-positive individuals within the country at the time (UNAIDS 2010).

Despite these statistical increases, the official approach to the epidemic continues to focus on the original risk groups identified in the 1980s.

This method for tackling the growing epidemic has enjoyed considerable success, particularly when compared to other affected countries. As male homosexual intercourse continues to make up a large proportion of the transmission rates within the United Kingdom, this approach is still useful in combating further infections. However, by continuing to focus on groups such as men who have sex with men and intravenous drug users, the official discourse is leaving out the emerging groups vulnerable to the epidemic. One of these groups, women, is the focus of this research in order to identify social, cultural and political vulnerabilities experienced within the United Kingdom.¹

Historically, women in general have not been considered particularly at risk for HIV, because the original risk groups involved primarily men and commercial sex workers. While this latter group included many women, the majority of the female public was deemed to be safe from exposure. This expectation is rapidly being outpaced as the epidemic spreads into previously unaffected groups and heterosexual transmission rates increase (AVERT 2011). The focus of the authoritative discourse, in this case the Department of Health and the National Health Service, on groups such as men who have sex with men and other at-risk groups is outdated. Women are currently only included within other risk groups, such as commercial sex workers or in terms of reproductive health thus ignoring the majority of women residing within the United Kingdom.

Methodology

Assistance and support from a national group run by HIV-positive individuals made it possible to gain access to participants for the study. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted from forty minutes to an hour and forty-five minutes. The questions were designed to span a timeframe beginning with pre-diagnosis awareness and attitudes towards HIV to the

¹ Some of the emerging groups that this research has highlighted as being potentially vulnerable to the epidemic in the UK include heterosexual women, new immigrants and asylum seekers.

present. The questions also focused on the previous knowledge of HIV and its transmission routes, availability of treatment, experiences of stigma or discrimination, and gender-based difficulties relating to HIV status. The issue of whether or not the government policies currently focused enough on women-specific issues within HIV programming was also part of the interviews. The interview structure provided fluidity giving agency to the participants within the discussion and to allow them include obstacles or issues that have affected their personal experiences of living with HIV.

The women interviewed for this research came from diverse backgrounds with eight out of nine having immigrated to the United Kingdom at some point during the last thirty years. Only one, Lily, 30, was born and raised in London. Despite being told the tests showed HIV had been present for seven years, Lily was the most recently diagnosed individual participating in the study having only had her status confirmed two months prior. Ranging in age from twenty-seven to forty-eight, the majority were from African origins. Ruby, 44, was the only non-African immigrant². Originally from Rome, she moved to the UK in 1987 and remained until 1993 when she returned to Italy. Following her diagnosis in Italy in 1997, she moved permanently to the United Kingdom in 1999.

The main motivations for migration involved education, personal safety relating to community disputes, asylum and the search for better financial opportunities to support their families. Of the women who immigrated to the United Kingdom, only Ruby and Evie were aware of their diagnosis prior to their arrival. With a mixed Ukrainian/Nigerian background, Evie has been positive for nine years and living in the United Kingdom for five. In terms of the length of time participants had known they were HIV-positive, Evie and Ruby had known their status the longest. In fact, only three others were HIV-positive for longer than a year: Olivia, 48, diagnosed one year ago, Amelia, 31, fifteen months, and Sophie, 24, two years. All three had immigrated to the United Kingdom from Nigeria, with Olivia arriving nine years ago and Amelia two years, while Sophie had been living in London for four years. Sophie was also the youngest participant in the study.

² All participants were assigned aliases to protect their anonymity due to the sensitive nature of this research. Aliases were selected from the most popular baby names in Britain to ensure further anonymity.

The remaining women were diagnosed within the four months prior to their participation with this research. Chloe, 34, had previously lived in the United Kingdom in 2002, and after returning to Uganda temporarily, had moved again to London in 2009. Grace, 37, on the other hand, is a special case with similarities to Lily’s experience. Having moved to the United Kingdom from Sudan when she was twelve years old, Grace was diagnosed HIV-positive for only three months. However, as was the case with Lily, tests were able to show that she had actually been HIV-positive for almost twenty years.

The illness experiences described by these nine women, coloured by their diverse backgrounds, allowed for the discussion of not only attitudes towards HIV in the United Kingdom but also the cultural constructions of the condition that they brought with them. Their experiences provide detailed insight into the obstacles and issues involved in HIV-positive life.

Results

For the purposes of this article, I have chosen to focus on the question that the participants felt most strongly about: does it help or hinder women to be left out of designated risk groups and why. Seen from the viewpoint of my participants, this proved to be a complicated issue with positive and negative attributes. Current risk groups, as highlighted in earlier sections, ignore the majority of women residing within the United Kingdom. In order to clarify why the current approach, or lack thereof, to women’s HIV infection creates further vulnerability, Ruby explains:

I don't think people see how specific women can be more vulnerable than men for example with prevention and even once you've been diagnosed. I don't know for example, many of the women who work here, they are, you know, maybe in the asylum system and on a very low income. They are pushed in very vulnerable positions. Also because they are women, they have to enter relationships in which they are economically dependent, you know, because if they are given these thirty pound vouchers maybe the only way you can find better accommodation and food and a normal standard of living is to get with a man who you wouldn't have a relationship with otherwise and you are forced by these circumstances even when the

relationship becomes abusive or if the man becomes abusive. It’s very difficult to come out. And even if you want to discuss your status, if you want to be negotiating condoms, if you are dependent on this person, if you cannot eat or would be sleeping in the street, you know, how are you going to disclose you’re HIV positive? I think it wouldn’t ever affect a man in the same way. I think for men there is much more safety, you know, and they are not so vulnerable to certain kinds of abuses. I think you are already vulnerable because you’ve got no money, you have no immigration status, you’re a foreigner in this country, you don’t have a support network, I think things are very difficult for women. (Ruby, 44)

Ruby highlights the way HIV status can be magnified by social elements such as economic hardship and personal safety. By ignoring women’s issues within sexual health, the authoritative discourse is inadvertently ignoring these concerns. Ironically, gender based initiatives (GBIs) have become a major global concern within HIV prevention, treatment and care—an area where the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) is one of the top three sources of funding (Balmori 2003).

The most common positive point discussed by the participants involved the protection of their privacy and the ability their absence from risk groups gives them essentially flying under the public radar. This in turn allows them to decide when and to whom they want to disclose their status.

Olivia, 48, a Nigerian immigrant who came to the United Kingdom in 2001 was diagnosed in 2009. She describes the importance of privacy and the potential consequences of disclosure:

If you never say something, it is still a secret. But the moment you say it out you cannot withdraw it. You never know maybe, if you tell your friend that might be the end. And your friend will still have a friend and they will say ‘oh, you better not sit where she sit. She is HIV victim.’ But because I never tell them, they can’t do anything with me. Protect myself and no one will suspect. (Olivia, 48)

This situation demonstrates the fact that privacy not only means keeping your business to yourself, but also protects you from misinformation that others may have, such as the ability to catch HIV from sharing a chair or a glass. Many of the participants were aware of individuals in their community who, due to their inclusion within a designated risk group, were suspected of being HIV positive after an illness. The discrimination they faced because of this served as a warning to my participants that they were better off staying quiet. As several told me, the public expect someone with HIV to look visibly sick. So, if you keep healthy, take your medication and go about your life, you are able to avoid unnecessary suffering.

While the issue of privacy was understandably important to all of the women I interviewed, the overall effect of risk groups and the lack of inclusion for women was seen as negative. The first negative impact these designations had was to lower women’s awareness of their own risk. Although Ruby is originally from Italy, she had lived in the United Kingdom both before and after her diagnosis. Here she describes her first awareness of the epidemic while she was living in the UK:

I remember when the epidemic came around, it was mostly the idea that it was something that happened to gay men and something that happened like, in the US. So I remember lots of my friends saying, ‘oh, I’m not going to sleep with anyone from the US!’ Thinking you know that’s going to defend you, but it’s this idea that it’s always about somebody else. (Ruby, 44)

Here she is expressing a sentiment shared by all of the women I interviewed, primarily that they were not aware that they were at risk because they were not involved in any of the highlighted activities. They felt that even a low risk should be stressed because the focus on particular groups gives the inaccurate impression that everyone else can ignore the issue.

Grace, 37, an immigrant from Sudan who has been living in the United Kingdom since she was 12 described another negative impact:

I had symptoms for years and I went to the doctor for years and I had chest infections. I’d been working really hard for the past twelve years, you know, like changing jobs etc. Falling sick a lot but just never took an HIV test and it was... nobody ever suggested it. (Grace, 37)

Grace’s experience demonstrates what could possibly be seen as the greatest danger facing by the women because of their lack of inclusion in risk groups: by not fitting the stereotype in the public perception of HIV, she faced delayed diagnosis. This is particularly important in the United Kingdom as the majority of all HIV related deaths occur due to late diagnosis and therefore a delayed start to the medication (AVERT 2011).

The final example of the negative impact of risk group exclusion comes from Sophie, 24, a Nigerian immigrant who has been HIV-positive for three years:

Because she’s healthy, because she’s not having any illness... they will not believe when you are healthy like every other person. Only when you are sick, visibly sick. (Sophie, 24)

In this quote, she was describing the difficulties some women can face when they do choose to disclose their status to partners or friends, mainly the fact that some people do not believe them because they, again, do not fit the perceived stereotype of the condition. This is mainly that someone who has HIV will look sick. At one time, this was probably true for most cases, such as in the 1980s when medication for the condition was still in its infancy. However, today, as Sophie explained further, “someone with HIV can live longer and healthier life than someone with diabetes”. This was the source of great frustration for the participants in that they were obviously grateful for good health but also upset at the disbelief they faced as a result.

Discussion

When approaching a subject such as HIV/AIDS within anthropology, it can be difficult to ascertain where and how it will fit within the subject area. Stray too far to either side of a very fine line and one can end up with a study that will be more at home within public

health, media studies or sociology. One way to avoid these potential missteps is through ethnography, an approach that allows local to view HIV epidemics anthropologically. This research has found that HIV-positive individuals can be recognised as a distinct community within the greater society of the United Kingdom. For example, through interactions with the support group, individuals are able to create a customised public sphere wherein their illness is made normative. As defined by Charles Taylor, in his work on modern social imaginaries, a public sphere is an area where individuals can discuss opinions on the practices of their social imaginary (Taylor 2002: 91-124). By seeking out others with the same condition, these women had created their own social imaginary wherein HIV-positive status is part of the hegemonic permeation of ideas, which allows other issues and obstacles to move to the forefront (Gramsci 1970). These issues were primarily non-medical and were instead focused on family life, financial difficulties and social interactions.

When faced with questions about the interaction between HIV/AIDS and the public, the participants in this study were unanimous in their assertion that HIV is still viewed negatively by a public that focuses on what the virus was, rather than what it is now. Essentially, these women felt that individuals, when asked about HIV or responding to HIV-related campaigns, still rely on the original information about the local epidemic. This includes the idea that only the groups highlighted as being at risk, such as men who have sex with men and intravenous drug users, are actually at risk. Therefore, these participants felt they had to be very careful about disclosing their status because they risked being assumed as a part of these risk groups. For women, unfortunately, the general public would align them with commercial sex workers without recognising the vulnerability of women outside of this designated risk group. Within this group of participants, all but two had contracted the virus from their husbands. The remaining two were infected from monogamous partners who had not known their own status. As the risk designations stand now, none of my participants would have been included under that umbrella of risk. The participants were very vocal about this fact and its impact on awareness.

By not being included in risk groups, they were unaware of the need to protect themselves. At the same time, their partners, who also did not fit the designations of risk, were unaware

of the need to learn their HIV-status, which resulted in passing on the virus to new partners. This study found that individuals in this group felt ‘at-risk groups’ should be abandoned in favour of focusing awareness campaigns on the behaviours and actions that can result in vulnerability to the virus. For example, highlighting a particular group allows individuals within the society who are not members to ignore the risks to themselves. If awareness campaigns focused on behaviour instead, such as all forms of unprotected sexual intercourse, the risks to the general public would be clearer. In addition, the label of “at-risk” groups assumes a universal understanding of illness and risk that cannot be guaranteed in a city as diverse as London. With such a complex society created by individuals from widely varied backgrounds, each individual will have created their personal understanding of risk as informed by their cultural understanding of illness (Kleinman, Eisenberg and Good 1978).

HIV/AIDS has always been a condition wherein individuals are quick to deny vulnerability. It is much easier to assume that the virus will affect someone else, somewhere else. Much of this attitude comes from the origins of the global pandemic and its first introduction to society. By affecting individuals on the fringes of society first, such as homosexual men in New York City, at a time when those groups were being designated as deviant or socially unacceptable, the risks of infection were easily ignored by the general public (Nelkin 1991: 300; Sontag 1989: 30-31).³ However, what ‘at-risk group’ designations ignore is the blurred margins, where individuals who participate in at-risk behaviour are able to align themselves with non-risk groups. This not only meant that awareness campaigns would not reach the intended targets but also that the epidemic was able to outgrow these early communities quickly.

The participants in this study agreed that shifting from ‘at-risk groups’ to a focus on the behaviours that cause vulnerability themselves would improve not only public awareness

³ While current studies have been able to retroactively diagnose individuals in certain areas of Africa as having been HIV-positive, this was not widely known during the 1980s when HIV first acknowledged by the global media. Therefore, the focus on men who have sex with men, commercial sex workers and intravenous drug users – all individuals on the fringes of society – was cemented in the general public’s perception of the virus.

but also the reactions to the virus and those affected. For example, if unprotected sexual intercourse was highlighted as being the source of HIV infection for the general public, individuals would be forced to confront their own vulnerability. This would also aid individuals who are currently HIV-positive because they would face less stigma and discrimination if it was clear, for example, that women can be infected through behaviours that don’t include commercial sex work. By allowing the inclusion of women in general, my participants felt they would receive more understanding from the general public. In addition, the ability to be more open about HIV status would allow the general public to see the reality of HIV infection today wherein it is no longer a death sentence but rather a chronic, manageable disease.

Conclusion

All of the women interviewed felt that at risk designations should be extended to highlight the risks to the general public, and in particular women. Although they felt their current exclusion from risk groups gave them a certain level of privacy, they agreed that the negative impact greatly outweighed this perceived benefit. Throughout this research, it was clear that labelling individuals and communities as “at-risk” is causing more confusion and denial about personal risk levels. The women in this study, despite being HIV-positive themselves, were easily able to demonstrate why they would not be included in each highlighted group. Therefore, these designations are becoming a tool for the way individuals perceive their own risk, and not in the way they were intended. Rather than demonstrating an individual’s potential for exposure, these labels provide a handy way to deny one’s risk level. The definition of risk is ultimately a personal one, and something that individuals are keen to minimize. By listing the characteristics of a particular “at-risk” group, individuals are able to disassociate themselves more easily because very few will represent every item on that list.

Data from 2010 has identified growing rates of HIV among individuals over the age of 50, while individuals under the age of 25 have seen record numbers of sexually transmitted disease infections (AVERT 2011). These statistics demonstrate a relaxation of concerns

about sexually transmitted diseases and, as my participants explained, this could usher in greater numbers of new HIV diagnoses.

In conclusion, the participants in my research were responding to my specific questions about women and designated risk groups and therefore their responses were framed in that context. However, it is clear their proposed shift from ‘at risk groups’ to a general focus on risk behaviour would be beneficial within the United Kingdom. This could help to eliminate some of the risk group directed stigma while also increasing awareness and understanding among the general public.

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Preserving Niyamgiri

An exploration of the fight to save a sacred mountain in
'bubbling' Orissa, India

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Abstract

Orissa is 'bubbling' with change and resistance. What might look like a dichotomous Dongria Kond-Vedanta struggle over the mining of the bauxite rich tops of the Niyamgiri range turns out to be far more complex than it seems, with far more players, identities and motives involved. Generalising such events, and defining people as part of an imagined transnational indigenous community, hides the specificities of the real situation. Moving beyond romanticisms, I explore some Dongria Kond practices, which are helping to preserve biodiversity, providing the backbone to the story of an endangered sacred mountain that caught the eyes of NGOs, media and activists worldwide.

Keywords

adivasis, resistance, India, indigeneity, identity

Into 'bubbling' Orissa

Dongria Kond resisters, and others fighting against industrialisation and development in the Niyamgiri region, can be seen as a part of the wider global community of indigenous resistance movements that are fighting against external pressures on their environment and livelihood. However, there are theoretical issues with putting their case in line with other indigenous groups, as well as with defining Dongria Konds, and indeed anyone, as indigenous. 'Tribals' in India are also known as 'adivasis' (in Sanskrit this translates as 'original people'), however adivasis cannot simply be slotted into the indigenous people

bracket. India's contemporary population has its origins in a complex set of migratory patterns. Li (2010: 386-7) rightly argues for better representation of capitalism's role in the creation of indigeneity. She explains that in the colonial period, groups were defined, in theory, according to their mode of production but that there were many cases where people engaged in the same mode of production were classified on either side of the 'tribe/peasant divide' meaning the only clear distinction between the two is the classification itself. Kamat (2001: 44) proposes that anthropology focusing only on India's tribal peoples stifles critiques of neoliberal economics by severing the links between them and peasants, 'all of whom are trapped in the same system of exploitation'. I will not delve deep into the tautological indigeneity debate begun by Kuper (2003); suffice to say that people living, and suffering, on the margins of industrialised society do exist. However, they are part of a wider network and not living in isolation as some indigenous rights rhetoric implies. Imagining a transnational collective of indigenous people becomes problematic in the context of Indian society and civilisation (Rycroft and Dasgupta 2011: 7). It is important to recognise the roots of constructs people are seen to exist within and not get carried away with categorisation.

I describe Orissa as 'bubbling' as this is how it felt while I was carrying out my fieldwork there in early 2011. Protests against industry were in the news most days; Maoists kidnapped a senior government official; and one day the papers told news of a manager at a steel factory being burnt alive (The Times of India 2011). A friend said at the time that it 'shows the real anger in Orissa, all coming out now'. Another day we had been relaxing on a beach near Puri. We faced a long line of traffic while driving back. Getting out of the car and walking ahead to find out what was going on, there was a confused and nervy collection of people, some police arriving, and a pile of tyres were just being set alight beyond some barriers that had been put up. It was a road blockade and the air was tense. We had seen an advertisement for a meeting about the aluminium-mining giant—Vedanta's, plans to build a university. My activist companions suggested the blockade was a

protest related to this meeting but we never found out for sure. As I continued to find, where action against Vedanta was to be found, the tones were hushed. For the most part, I heard no mention of the Company in the villages and some warned me not to bring up the subject. A few weeks later, whilst waiting in the shade of a shop for my lift, a man with connections to the *Niyamgiri Surakhya Samiti* (Niyamgiri Protection Society; N.S.S.) told me ‘people aren’t happy’. I asked him if he was referring to Vedanta—he nodded and quickly left. A few days later, as police came to the house I was staying in and told me to leave the area that day, a friend immediately said ‘Vedanta’ as they turned away. Exchanges like these symbolise the fear that people have about speaking out against the combined forces of companies and state in Orissa.

My fieldwork focused on the resistance movement to the mining of the Niyamgiri Hills of Western Orissa for bauxite, the ore that is refined into aluminium. I had heard at home that Dongria Kondh people had formed the resistance to save their sacred¹ mountains—the summits of which are visible from all around the plains and lower hills. As the morning haze disappears, they appear, set in a landscape of rich red-brown earth and fertile green, dotted with beautiful banyan trees and more recently, cut into by wider and wider roads for the Company's vehicles.²

The main guise of that Company is Vedanta Resources, British registered and making 8 billion dollars in revenue. It also operates under the name of one of its subsidiaries, Sterlite.³ However, it was Sterlite, with the Orissa Mining Corporation (OMC), that made the second application to mine Niyamgiri after India's Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that Vedanta Aluminium Limited (VAL; the company based in Orissa which is 70% Vedanta

¹ I refer to Niyamgiri as sacred to reflect what international NGO and media rhetoric use to describe it, but also to echo a word so popular in classical anthropology.

² According to Padel (2011), the first users of the roads in the Niyamgiri region, the building of which was overseen by the Dongria Kondh Development Agency (DKDA), were the timber and liquor mafias.

³ As one activist rightly asked, ‘how can the same company with another name be allowed?’

and 30% Sterlite, see Vedanta, 2012) was to have no involvement due to their violations of the law in building their refinery.⁴ Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) announced in 2010 that the Company would not be given forest clearance to dig an open cast bauxite mine on Niyamgiri, following a government report (Saxena et al. 2010). However VAL had already built a refinery for which the clearance was not properly gained, at the base of the mountains. Bauxite comes in from other areas in India to this refinery on the tracks of a railway built specifically for that purpose. The refinery was built at the source of the Vansadhara River and is now polluting it and the air around it, affecting 22 villages (Samadrusti 2008). In a statement to Al Jazeera (2009) Vedanta's spokesperson denied 'any forceful or illegal eviction' and said that they had 'worked with state authorities'. The latter point indicates the problem here; as the Saxena report (2010: 7) noted there is an 'appalling degree of collusion' of local government officials with Vedanta, who have a 'total contempt for the law'.

Behind the scenes of Niyamgiri

The name Niyamgiri is Sanskrit in origin; '*niyam*' meaning law and '*giri*' meaning mountain. I will briefly introduce the actors, identities and influences involved in the fight over this mountain of law.

Dongria Konds and 'outsiders'

In Dongria Kond cosmology *Niyam Raja*, their 'Lord of Law', lives at the tops of the highest of the mountains in the Niyamgiri range. There is a Dongria Kond practice of maintaining a sacred grove on mountaintops, where trees are not cut. This is done to appease Niyam Raja, who helps to keep order (and preserves biodiversity). He is one of the most revered deities within Dongria culture, along with *Darni Penu* (Earth Goddess). NGOs, activists and international media have, I believe, rightly described Niyamgiri as sacred.

⁴ They had applied only for environmental and not forest clearance to build the refinery.

However, their rhetoric often simplifies the issue and makes it easy to imagine some kind of storybook version of life in the hills. It is true that local people blocked the road to outsiders and that Vedanta jeeps were burnt, but this is not simply a struggle between local people and an international company. There are many different groups involved, all with their own motives. As Gledhill (2000: 90) recognises, ‘there are conflicts even within small-scale local social movements, and those not involved in the resistance are not necessarily collaborating with the dominant power’. As well as some Dongria, there are the local activists and politicians, some that travel further afield campaigning for adivasi rights and at times, representatives from national and international NGOs. A woman I met from Delhi who had been writing about the Niyamgiri story since 2004 indicated the need for a ‘stronger movement on the ground’. But for whom?

I spoke with an Indian anthropologist who wished to remain anonymous about the resistance movement; he suggested that the ‘majority of the Dongria must not have a real understanding of this protest movement’. It was interesting to hear this after having seen so many Dongria Kond people at a *puja* (worship) I had attended, sing, dance and celebrate the survival of their mountain. What a ‘real’ understanding is to one person might be entirely different to another, according to their background and motives. There is a strong resistance among Dongria Kond people that I met, but it was not solely them that began it. One non-Dongria activist in particular was instrumental in starting the movement. People and organisations with links at national and international levels have been involved, some still are. There is a risk that these ‘outsiders’ might not be representing the needs of Dongria people, who are central to the struggle, but to what level are they outsiders anyhow?

There is a danger of making a too strict line between local and outsider, as ever. By distinguishing locals only as Dongria adivasis is to disregard the other people in the area, such as the Majhi Konds from Lanjigarh that have been displaced by Vedanta’s refinery

and are being affected by pollution. And how about the non-*adivasi* people living in the villages surrounding Niyamgiri? Would their lives not be just as affected by an open cast mine being built on Niyamgiri, as it would destroy the water source? Even the bigger towns and cities' water supply, miles away, would be affected by the removal of bauxite from the mountain. This creation of exclusivity through singling out *adivasis* from others can have negative influences on those others and is based on a colonial construct which places people in Li's (2010: 399) 'communal fix', making them dependent on the system.

The concept of outsiders indicates boundaries. Although geographical boundaries are no longer solid due to globalisation, migration and communication, ethnic boundaries persist (Barth 1998: 9) and social relations are maintained across all kinds of boundaries.

Indigenous identities are not fixed instead these are ascribed as well as claimed. The transnational indigenous rights movement and many NGOs (and GOs) drive the persistence of a dichotomy of indigenous and modern through their rhetoric about indigenous people, their cultures and languages that need to be protected. Indigenous people must be seen within the context of their specific histories. It can be dangerous to make a distinction between indigenous and modern. It is also important to ask whether the people who are representing indigenous rights at international meetings are truly representing the views and causes of those who are struggling.

Adivasi struggles

The Niyamgiri story can be placed within the context of other *adivasi* resistance movements, and other industrial development projects in Orissa. I was told more than once that it had similarities with the movement against plans to mine Gandharmardan Mountains, also rich in bauxite, in the 1980s. This had been a success story for those that resisted it, although plans remain to mine. Elsewhere in Orissa, a large-scale steel project has been planned by South Korean mining giant Posco. Human barricades and a strong resistance movement have prevented Posco entering the land they have gained clearance to

build on. While in Koraput, a region of Orissa close to Niyamgiri, I learnt that around 15,000 people attended a meeting about adivasi rights, showing the scale of some of these movements. Adivasi resistance movements are nothing new; they stem from a long history of unrest. Ghosh (2006: 502-6) describes the 30 year old Koel-Karo movement in Jharkhand against the construction of two hydroelectric dams. He sees it as one of the examples of adivasi peasant-led Jharkhandi local movements, because it was not a movement organised by activists and NGOs, as I learnt that Niyamgiri had largely been.

Ghosh makes the distinction that these Jharkhandi movements are specifically against displacement. This brings to light the divide between those living on the land, whose main concern is displacement, and those who are involved in the movement but not living on the land, whose struggle is against the wider forces of neoliberalisation. As movements develop, these concerns blend.

Maoists, media and the state

Maoists are active in Chhattisgarh, the state that Orissa borders on the west, close to Niyamgiri; I was warned by some of my Indian contacts of this before leaving the UK, that it was a state the government could no longer control. However, the only threats I came across were from police, and never encountered any Maoist activity directly, only met some CPI-ML party members. Maoists are being 'combed' for and killed by police, covered by the national media almost daily. Roy (2010: 3) points out how this police drive, known as Operation Green Hunt 'has been proclaimed as well as denied'.

Dongria Kond men I met were imprisoned for having Maoist sympathies for their resistance against what we must remember is a company, not the country. While leaving Orissa I learnt that Dongria Konds had been threatened that they would be branded as Maoists if they continued to resist. Once this happened, what chance did Dongria Kond people stand? And what about the Dongria Konds that were not involved in the resistance

movement? Even still, what crime had those that were committed? India is a democracy, on paper at least, and yet as an environmentalist told me from personal experience, being an enemy of the state is a crime. What is really lying behind Operation Green Hunt? Sundar (2007: 267) argues that a focus on Naxalite violence conceals the nature of Indian democracy. Across the world in recent years, the ‘war on terror’ has taken centre stage, hiding state-made changes such as those in the UK to the rights of people that are arrested under suspicion of terrorism.

Orissa has been ruled by Naveen Patnaik and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) party since 2000. The BJD government stated that it would prioritise mining applications by companies that ‘didn’t just take the ore/mineral out of the state but refined and processed it within Orissa’ (Malik 2011). Therefore, from the start, Patnaik’s party showed it was ready to welcome and support large-scale industrial projects for the ‘national interest’⁵. How about the interests of those in the state of Orissa? It seems the only direction that has been considered is a profit centred drive to change Orissa’s status as one of the poorest states in India. The pressure to come in line with the rest of ‘shining’⁶ India and with other industrialised nations, and the temptation of the offerings from the World Bank and other international funders on the condition of increasing development activity is too much.

Development for whom?

Upon arrival in the Niyamgiri region late at night and in the dark house of one of the ‘leaders of the movement’ as he was introduced, I learnt that Vedanta were proposing to

⁵ This is a phrase that is used by government to define a development project; however there is no solid framework for what the national interest or the kind of project should be. Therefore government can overrule decisions about development projects by defining them in this way. Huzzey (2011) explains how private interests became ‘national interests’ in the 18th century and in turn corporate interests.

⁶ I refer to India as ‘shining’ as a reference to the ‘vociferous and expensive media blitz’ (Nayar, 2005: 72) broadcast by the Indian government in 2003-5, advertising the country’s apparently booming economy. Since then the use of the slogan has become popular on the one hand for its intended meaning, by government and media and on the other hand, cynically by those who can see that there is more to India’s economy than the shining world of IT.

expand the aluminium refinery at Lanjigarh to have the capacity of producing 6 million tons of alumina per annum (mtpa) rather than the current 1 mtpa. Immediately I began to realise that the future of the Niyamgiri hills is not as secure as I had been led to believe by the media at home. In fact it is just one mountain that has been protected by central government directives, and so many people that I met did not believe this would last for long. The bauxite reserve in Niyamgiri would only be enough for 30 years' worth of mining at the planned rate; I was told over and again. How does that compare to the livelihoods of many future generations of Dongria Kond people?

In Niyamgiri development is very much enforced change on the part of the Company and this has not had a positive impact on the lives of many of the people living there. Some no longer live in their villages; they have been displaced to specifically built colonies (Samadrusti 2010). In the UK in the 18th century, the Enclosures Act also displaced many families from their villages, and land went from being commonly to privately owned⁷. More than 300 years of living in this way has had a huge effect on the way the British think about land ownership. This would then have had an effect on the way India changed under British colonial rule, with all its land becoming government property in 1892.

Policies and attitudes introduced to colonial India have remained; NGOs often play a part in this. It is important to try not to conceive two different Indias—colonial and post-colonial—as these are not two separate entities. It makes more sense to think of a country that continues to have a mix of global influences, some of which were present centuries ago.

⁷ There was, however, a strong resistance movement to the Enclosures Act in the UK, but just like adivasi resistance movements, it is rarely taught about in schools.

The wider angle lens

The Vedanta-Niyamgiri story had become symbolic by the time I was carrying out my fieldwork; representing adivasi victory over industrialisation and representing an increase in environmental concern in India. It also got a significant amount of international attention. Dongria Konds were splashed across top film magazine *Variety*'s pages in 2010 as the real 'Na'vi' in reference to the humanoids inhabiting Pandora in the blockbuster 'Avatar' in an appeal by NGO Survival International to the film's director James Cameron. Survival is one of the main international NGOs that have worked with the resistance movement in Niyamgiri.

Other international organisations have been involved too, such as Action Aid and Amnesty. The British Government condemned Vedanta's project (Al Jazeera 2009) and international media have covered the story. Internet and social media have become an instrumental part of social movements and protests. Funding for politically orientated action is very difficult to gain so being able to gain support and disseminate information in this way is extremely valuable. It also enables a wide international reach, allowing many people to find out about and support causes they identify with and researchers like myself to keep in touch with news and opinion that was not possible in fieldwork in the past. The use of the internet and particularly social media transforms the boundaries of social units, which an anthropologist may conceptualise, and they are shifting and changing all the time. This changes the nature of fieldwork as the field itself is different from before and is less territorially defined now. As Eriksen (2007: 8) said so well in his analysis of globalisation, 'distance no longer means separation'.

I would argue that the international eye, once caught, had an impact on the success and the demographic of the resistance movement. International NGOs were instrumental in widening the angle of the lens on Niyamgiri but other actors were involved too; technology-savvy activists and others with good national and international contacts and

repute. Dongria Konds continue to be at the core of both the rhetoric and of course of the situation on the ground, but here they are joined by other Konds and non-*adivasi* villagers too. Local NGOs play a part, as do the media. Now I will discuss what forms the backbone of this rhetoric about Dongria Konds and their sacred mountain.

Preserving a sacred mountain

I mentioned above the Dongria Kond policy of maintaining sacred groves (*trunjeli muanris*). The cutting of trees is seen as a ‘violation of his [*Niyam Raja*’s] sovereignty’ (Jena et al. 2002: 236) so is traditionally prohibited. This and other practices have helped to maintain biodiversity in Niyamgiri (Kumar and Choudhury 2006: 5). The mountain is central to Dongria Kond cosmology and life, like ‘different parts of the body’ one man told me. When asked their religion by census officials Konds have often answered ‘mountain’ (Padel and Das 2010: 4). I heard *Darni Penu* and *Niyam Raja* commonly mentioned in everyday conversation as well as in rituals, showing the centrality land and mountain have in Dongria Kond cosmology.

Rhetoric about indigenous people and their connection with the land is often far too generalised and not based on real examples, instead on an imagined transnational native community that lives in harmony with nature. Milton (2006: 351) suggests that the main reason for the persistence of such myths about ‘primitive ecological wisdom’ is that it gives environmentalists hope that there is a ‘ready-made solution to environmental problems’.⁸ I am not suggesting Dongria Konds are ‘guardians of biodiversity’ (Brosius 1999: 282) as many environmentalists and others have about indigenous people.⁹ However, the majority of Dongria Kond agricultural practices remain. Some help to retain a diverse ecosystem,

⁸ Alternatively, as Li (2010: 397) aptly describes it, ‘a salve to their anxious modernity’.

⁹ The existence of biodiversity itself has been challenged by Escobar (2006: 244) who refers to it as an ‘idea’, which has become part of the ‘narrative of biological crisis’. Biodiversity is by no means an imagined construct, but a defined measure (Purvis and Hector 2000, and the references therein). Extensive research has shown that biodiversity is critical for ecosystem functioning and human wellbeing (Naeem et al. 2009 and the references therein).

such as the growing of many different perennial rice varieties¹⁰, some drought resistant; the banning of cutting trees in sacred groves; and the maintenance of gardens and hillsides in which a wide range of fruit, vegetables and other plants are grown.

Some Dongria Kond farmers have been part of government and NGO programmes which provide free seeds and fertilisers. These programmes tend to run for a limited period, commonly around five years, after which farmers have to purchase seed. The rice or other grain that has been grown also usually has to be replanted each year. Conversely, many seed types native to regions like Niyamgiri are perennial. Some are also drought resistant, making them invaluable in the changing climate that our planet is experiencing. Adivasi farmers' knowledge and their seed types are what multinational seed companies would patent if given the chance, so the maintenance and protection of this knowledge and those seeds are instrumental in both offering solutions to climate change and in truly empowering adivasi farmers. The Dongria Kond belief that groundwater can be kept at an optimum level only if natural forests on hilltops are untouched throws significant light when we bring it together with the knowledge that bauxite retains water. When will we begin listening to local knowledge such as this? As Milton argues:

If no human culture holds the key to ecological wisdom, then it is essential to conserve the greatest possible number of ways of interacting with the environment if we are to maximize the chances of survival, both of our own species and of those with which we share the planet. (Milton 2006: 354)

Conclusions

Dongria Kond resisters and their multiple identities, 'outsiders', media and the state with its strive for industrialisation all play a part in the Niyamgiri's story. There are different perceptions of the movement and its motives, for example in the difference between those

¹⁰ I learnt from an ecologist that there were 8000 varieties of rice in Orissa before 1970, now there are only 500.

who see it as a fight against capitalism and those who see it as a struggle against being displaced from their land, but how much does this matter? They are both only different aspects of the same issue. More important is the struggle itself.

I have demonstrated how some Dongria Kond beliefs and practices are helping to preserve Niyamgiri's high level of biodiversity, which in turn helped to create the rhetoric of a sacred mountain, which caught the international eye. Activists and international NGOs led this resistance movement in the beginning. Orissa state government colludes with industry and wants to see GDP raised. What chance do Dongria Konds and other adivasis then stand in the face of this movement as international funders and stakeholders back up these powers? Younger generations are involved in the movement, but I wonder if, as with the story I heard of one young Dongria man, temptations from companies will prevail over maintaining forest land and religion. With Operation Green Hunt continuing to home in on adivasi villages how long can this resistance movement continue to fight industrialisation and the displacement it causes?

Niyamgiri is symbolic of the effects industrialisation is having on the people of Orissa but this is not to say that mine is a story based on the old dichotomy of traditional and modern. Dongria Konds are facing socio-economic change despite what happens to their mountains, with a cash economy having become part of their lives. However, there are some Dongria people still resisting this change, with the help of 'outsiders'. They and others are using Dongria Kond and adivasi identities as tools to break down boundaries, garner support, and face their separate but intertwined futures.

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Making home away from home

A case-study of archival research of the Nanyang Emigration in China

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/chen2012.pdf>

Abstract

The project investigates how migrant labourers make home on their journeys away from home, and how they express and fulfil their identities through acts of home-making. Instead of paying attention to the economic motivations of labour migration, this project focuses more on seeking individual human capacities ‘to go beyond present circumstances of being’ (Rapport 2010:3) in terms of making home on the move: making a mobile home beyond the fixed spatial one, and making an imagined home beyond the material one. Reflecting their different perceptions of home, people utilise different resources and media in ‘making’ their homes. Based on the historical context of Nanyang (Southeast Asia) Emigration (1860 - 1949), I seek to find out how we can better know the ways the migrants make their homes, and their ideas of home through a particular type of family remittance letter (*qiaopi*). The article ends up opening a discussion of how we can ethnographically investigate migrants’ imagined home in a historical context.

Keywords

Nanyang Emigration, archive, *qiaopi*, materiality, imagination

Introduction

Migration seems to be a major feature of human life and making home is ubiquitous. As we move physically so do our social and personal boundaries shift. In this sense, migration involves a shift from one circumstance of being to another. By doing so, it may bring about

a process of self re-creation or re-imagination to the migrants to deal with the new world in a way that is different from their previous one. This project examines how an individual and a community can make home on the move, how they can move in order to make home, and how, through making home, they create a sense of self, others and the world. The ways in which people make mobile homes beyond fixed ones and imagined homes beyond physical ones when on the move will lie at the heart of my discussion. This project is also a methodological case study, endeavouring to find ways to best approach and know migrants and their ideas of home. A particular concern is how their ‘imagined home’ can be investigated ethnographically. A pilot field visiting in an archive of overseas remittance letters in China motivated this article.

Is home a place, a space, a feeling, a hope, a practice and/or a journey? Anthropologists, social scientists and philosophers have been involved in the study of home and home-related topics such as house and society (Bourdieu 1970, 1977; Lévi-Strauss 1983, 1987, 1991), building and dwelling (Heidegger 1971; Ingold 1995; Oliver, 1987). More recently, Miller (2001) looks at the material cultural aspect of home: we possess our homes, but our homes may possess us as well. By saying so, Miller implies that people transformed their home interiors as a mode of self-expression; at the same time, they come to see their life as shaped by the influence of the home itself, being thwarted ‘by the prior presence of their houses and orders of their material culture’ (2001: 10). As such, home, defined as a dwelling we possess, is represented as a spatial or relational realm; but in the sense of home possessing us, they are perhaps more accurately ‘represented’ as an ideological structure (Gurney 1997; Somerville 1992), which can be conceptual and not necessary physical. In an edited collection by Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (1998) on perceptions of home in a world of movement, Ladislav Holy examines the Czech state’s imaginings of the nation (homeland) as home and family to its people. Holy (1998) explores the individual imaginings of new forms of collective childhood identity in Britain. Being an ‘ideological structure’, to some degree implies that home can be detached from its own physical

location and embodied in people's imagination, following along with one's movement from place to place. From this point of view, home is more than a feeling, a hope, a practice or a journey. It is at this point where my project links migration and home-making together. I will explore the idea of home and home-making through the emigrants' remittance letters in the context of the historical Nanyang Emigration.

Nanyang Emigration in South China

The opening of Shantou city in South China as a treaty port in 1860 greatly increased both the flux of incoming goods and outgoing human beings. The chaos in China in the late Qing dynasty (1840 – 1911) and the great demand for labour in Southeast Asia during this period resulted in massive migration. Millions of people in Guangdong and Fujian provinces left their homeland for Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. The 'piglet trade'¹ ended with the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911 but large-scale migration from Guangdong and Fujian to Southeast Asia continued until the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. This massive labour emigration from Southern China to Southeast Asia from the mid-nineteenth century to 1949 was called 'Xia Nanyang' (Chen 2009). The term 'Xia Nanyang' combines 'xia', which means travelling south and 'Nanyang', which means Southeast Asia.

What are *qiaopi*?

The *qiaopi* is a Chinese overseas remittance, normally accompanied by a family letter and sent in a special envelope. In the Chaoshan dialect, '*qiao*' means 'overseas Chinese', '*pi*' means 'letter'. The *qiaopi* delivery business developed throughout the Nanyang Emigration, beginning from privately arranged remittance deliveries by individuals called '*shuike*' (individual courier by sea). Later it became a more official postal service, operated

¹ From the mid-nineteenth century and lasting until 1911, there was a phenomenon called 'Zhuzai Maoyi' ('piglet trade'), a kind of trade of contract labour between South China and Southeast Asia. The great number of emigrants and their poor working condition in Southeast Asia led to their being labelled as 'piglet'.

by the Overseas Chinese Remittance Bureau, which eventually was incorporated into the national banking system in 1979 (Chen 2009).

Nowadays, the *qiaopi* business has faded away with the disappearance of the Nanyang Emigration. Surviving *qiaopi* provide important documentary records of the relationship between the Nanyang emigrants and their homelands. *Qiaopi* are original and valuable research materials about the lives of *huaqiao* (Overseas Chinese) and provide information about how they kept in touch with their families back home. Chaoshan² History and Culture Research Centre collected, organised and preserved *qiaopi* since 1994. According to Weizhong Wang (curator of the Chaoshan *Qiaopi* Archive), in March 2010, the Chaoshan *qiaopi* was recognised as an official part of the National Archive Resource system. On 23rd December 2010, the first *qiaopi* archive in China was opened in Shantou: the Chaoshan *Qiaopi* Archive. The Archive has so far collected more than 40,000 pieces of original *qiaopi* and 60,000 scanned images, as well as tools used by the *pijiao* (*qiaopi* deliverer) and *Qiaopi-ju* (Overseas Chinese Remittance Bureau).

Why do qiaopi matter?

The collection of many *qiaopi* in a specially constructed archive represents the constitution of a form of collective consciousness. The preservation of the *qiaopi* emphasises their value as a symbol of *qiao-xiang* (homeland of the Overseas Chinese) and the Nanyang Emigration, and in turn, the importance of this *qiao-xiang* identity to the Chaoshan region.

However, a material culture approach claims that objects create meanings not only through symbols but objects themselves have meanings. They are part of social life. Therefore, the answer to the question of why a particular thing is important does not fully explain why it

² The Chaoshan region is in northeast of Guangdong province in China. The region consists of three cities: Chaozhou, Shantou and Jieyang.

‘matters’ (Miller 1998: 3). Daniel Miller argues that terms such as ‘importance’ or ‘significance’ tend to imply an idea that ‘I demonstrate an important relationship between social dimension A and artefact form B’, while, the term ‘matter’ is more likely ‘to lead us to the concerns of those being studied than those doing the studying’ (1998: 10-11). From this approach, it could be interesting to explore *qiaopi* itself, as an artefact form, in both its materiality and the concerns of ‘producing’ it – such as saving money, considering the usage and distribution of the remittance and writing the letter enclosed.

In the specific qualities and characteristics of their materiality, *qiaopi* are different from other normal family letters. For example, *qiaopi* always enclosed remittance along with a family letter—the cover of the envelope often included a postscript mentioning the amount of money attached—and elaborate distribution of the remittance among family members expected as part of the content of the letter (Chen 2009; He 2008). Material aspects of the letter are also interesting, such as the quality of the envelope paper, the format and design of the envelope, and the quality of calligraphy and printing. The text on the covers of the envelopes is also rich in contextual information. Mailing address is the principal mean of cataloguing the Chaoshan *qiaopi* in the archive. There are some special categories that gather *qiaopi* sent during particular eventful time periods. Most of the *qiaopi* under special catalogues have cachets or slogans on their covers reflecting major world events. For instance, a special catalogue includes all of the *qiaopi* referring to the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). Therefore, these cachets and slogans reflect the connection between notions of home and nationality among the emigrants. Figure 1 shows the cover of a *qiaopi* envelope taken during my pilot field visit.



Figure 1: The cover of a *qiaopi*

There is a complex relationship between a *qiaopi* as the medium and the message it expresses. In Miller's (1998) edited collection, *Material Culture: why some things matter*, Pellegrin contrasts 'the relative intimacy of the Post-it® Note and the way that formal paper is used to express the seriousness of the organisation as a whole to the outside world' (1998: 16). I argue that in particular the remittance and its detailed distribution throughout families, clans or even the wider village homeland could be a pathway through which to study ideas of home among the Nanyang emigrants. In this sense, *qiaopi* matter because of the message they carry. They may express ideas of home connected with ideas of families, clans, a village homeland, or even the nation as a whole. They may also express a balance of the emigrants' concern between their original families in Chaoshan and their second families in Nanyang (the so-called 'dual family system').

If *qiaopi* express various ideas of home among the Nanyang emigrants, the process of 'producing' them, such as the act of writing, could be interpreted as a process of 'making' that very 'home' conceptually. Miller states that the material cultural approach of 'mattering' also emphasises 'an appreciation that the key moment in which people construct themselves or are constructed by others is increasingly through relations with

cultural forms in the arena of consumption’ (1998: 11). In the case of Nanyang Emigration, *qiaopi* represent the ‘cultural forms’ of the emigrants’ home ‘consumption’. So, examining the moment of writing *qiaopi* may help understand the process of the Nanyang emigrants’ construction of their ideas of home, themselves and even their identities; in other words, the process of their ‘home-making’ away from home.

In order to illustrate the possibility of exploring the idea of home among the Nanyang emigrant ancestors by way of *qiaopi* letters, and to argue that the very acts of writing and sending *qiaopi* were themselves ways of making home to the them, I will explore a specific piece of *qiaopi* I have collected from Chaoshan.

Case Study: the *qiaopi* of Ma Jinqun

I am going to study now a piece of *qiaopi* written by Ma Jinqun in 1930. It was sent from Singapore to China. According to his descendants, Ma migrated as a labour worker from Chaoshan to Singapore in 1921, leaving his parents, wife and two sons at home. He did not return to his Chaoshan homeland until 1947. During these years, he sent a *qiaopi* to his family almost every month.

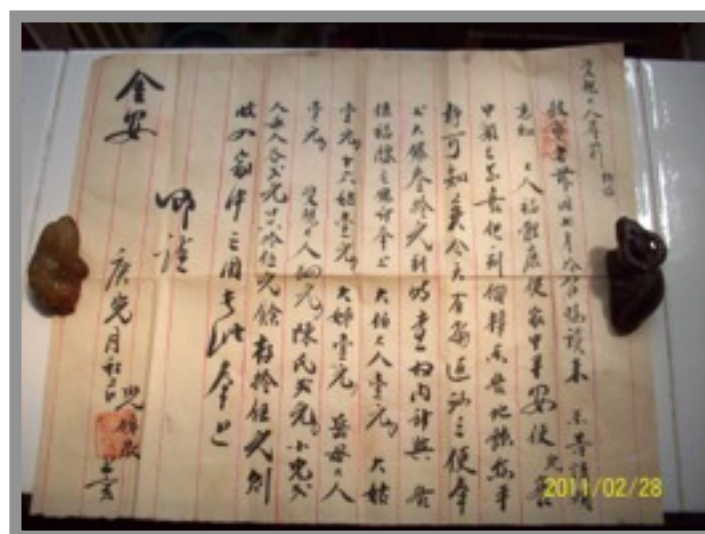


Figure 2: The family letter enclosed inside the *qiaopi* envelope

The content of the letter shows us various kinds of concerns from Ma with regard to the idea of home. For instance, Ma considered himself to be a guest in Singapore, writing ‘I, your son, as a guest here far away from home’. Phrases such as ‘I hope that our homeland Zhangdong is at peace’ and ‘Thanks to our Heaven that things are well in both Singapore and the Chaoshan homeland’ reflect his great concern for his homeland. In addition, Ma was responsible for allocating the money among family members, clan relatives and household maintenance funds.³ Ma elaborated the distribution of the remittance in the letter. Decisions made by Ma when he was writing the letter, to some degree, express his concept of home and can be considered as an explicit act of home-making.

Beyond the content of the letter itself, the acts and moments of the letter writing process itself are also worth exploring. Miller (1998: 441) claims that one form of relationship between artefacts and people ‘is derived from a temporal equivalence in which objects stand for the particular states of persons at that time’. He then argues that this relationship concerns anthropologists the most because they tend to consider the relationship between persons and artefacts as being static in one frame of time. Borrowing Platt’s (in press) idea of ‘the archive as field event’, if I view Ma’s *qiaopi* letter as a ‘field event’, and my archival investigation of this piece as the ‘technique of participant observation’, then the moment of Ma’s writing becomes a particular state/way of Ma’s ‘home-making’ that I can explore. This perceptive makes the exploration of *qiaopi* significant and relates to the home-making of migrants.

Viewing a *qiaopi* as a field event, to read/investigate Ma’s *qiaopi* also means that to ‘read’/know Ma, as an individual who makes decisions all throughout the writing of his remittance letter. ‘Should I tell my parents about a mine disaster yesterday here?’ ‘Should I

³ Within the letter, Ma explained clearly the distribution of the 30 yuan: ‘Here are the details to each family member: one yuan for my eldest uncle, one for my eldest aunt, one for my sixteenth aunt, one for my eldest sister, one for my mother in law, four for my parents, two for my wife, and yuan for my two sons. These are fifteen yuan in total. The other fifteen yuan will be useful for maintaining the household.’

tell them I miss them very much?’ or ‘should I let them know I feel lonely especially during the Spring Festival?’⁴ Eventually, to express his homesickness and concern for his parents’ health, Ma wrote simple sentences such as ‘I, your son, as a guest here far away from home, was extremely glad to know that you were in good health and everything went well at home’ and ‘I hope that our homeland Zhangdong is at peace’. Instead of using words like ‘missing home’, ‘sad’ or ‘lonely’, Ma chose words like ‘extremely glad to know’ and ‘I hope’. However, as a reader, I can still feel Ma’s homesick through words like ‘as a guest’, or ‘our homeland Zhangdong’. Ma wrote his letter nine years after leaving home. The homeland (e.g. Zhangdong) of sojourners (e.g. Ma) is a homeland of people who are no longer at home in it. It is home for people who left. Ma spent 26 years away from home to make money in order to be a son, a husband and a father, to benefit whom he loved or who loved him. Over those 26 years, Ma showed his love to his family by not showing them the everyday love of being together. It is this concern that demonstrate a very specific idea of home and ‘making home’ away from home among migrants.

To sum up, *qiaopi* matter because they may carry messages about migrants’ ideas of home, either as family, clan, village homeland, or as the nation, as well as messages about their ways of making home such as ‘showing love by hiding love’. Sending remittance back home is a way of ‘home consumption’ connected to house building and household raising while the acts of writing letters home, for instance, are ways of making home conceptually.

Discussion

In order to know the past, my primary method is *qiaopi* archival research. Borrowing Platt’s (in press) idea of the archive as field event, I conduct my research in the Chaoshan *Qiaopi* Archive, envisaging *qiaopi* research as a form of ‘fieldwork’. My investigation includes this ‘field site’ as a whole, such as its access, filing and categories, and some key ‘informants’,

⁴ Ma wrote the letter on the day following Chinese New Year’s day.

selecting a few pieces of *qiaopi* to examine closely.

Geertz (1993: 10) argues that culture is an ‘acted document’ and thus ‘doing ethnography is like trying to read a manuscript’. He states that all ethnographers are in a sense merely readers whose ‘texts’ happen to take a more practical form. Following the same logic but travelling in the opposite direction, to read a piece of *qiaopi* for me has, in some respects, the sense of ‘silent interview’. Instead of stepping on to real land, I put them between the lines of a remittance family letter.

Then, how should one read this ‘field’ between lines? Platt (2007) examines the historical enactment of ‘re-enactment’ by Collingwood (1994) and argues that it can be applied in anthropology as well. Platt argues that knowing the past ‘involves a specific kind of activity which should not be strange to ethnographers, namely the imaginative re-enactment of other people’s thoughts, purposes, experiences and intentions’ (2007: 119). Therefore, ‘re-enacting the way people experienced different times and temporalities in radically different way is ... an essential precondition for knowing the past’ (2007: 119). To re-enact the thoughts and actions of people in the past, as Platt (2007: 126) states, ‘a deal of imagination is required’. At this point, Platt introduces another idea from Collingwood, ‘*priori* imagination’ (2007: 126). Historical traces that remain even until today are always incomplete and the imagination provides the historical reconstruction. Based on this theoretical framework, my ‘field’ research places *qiaopi* in an important role of leading us to the past, accessing the knowledge of the past. They have ‘the power to render accessible traces from the past, which may be constituted an evidence for persons, actions and events, when interrogated from a horizon in the present’ (Platt, in press: 4).

However, in order to prevent an extremely fictional ‘reading’ of the ‘field’, there are particular points requiring careful attention in the usage of imagination in archival research. As Platt (2007) interprets Collingwood’s point, the ‘webs of imagination’ are not

spun between the fixed points of ‘facts’ given us by our authorities. We have to criticise the authorities in order to ‘achieve’ these fixed points. So, when I ‘read’ the ‘field’, I should read against the grain. In particular, for further research, I suggest to read *qiaopi* not just for what is said but also for how it is said, not just for what is included but also for what is omitted. Another concern about using imagination in archival research is about ‘making sense’ and what constitutes ‘evidence’ (Collingwood 1994; Platt 2007). Besides the similar task required of novelists and anthropologists/historians, to create a picture that make sense, the anthropologists/historians has an obligation: as far as possible to make a picture of what actually happen. Therefore, in order to explore the migrants’ ideas of home from *qiaopi*, I locate each piece of *qiaopi* in its specific time and space, being consistent with the text itself while evaluating how the very picture that I form through my reading stands in relation to other independent evidence.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Nigel Rapport and Dr Stephanie Bunn. Special thanks are due to Professor Tristan Platt, Professor Walter Hakala, Dr Andrew Cooper and Dr Yanchuan Cai. Muhammad Aurang Zeb Mughal provided valuable editorial assistance. The departmental travel grant from University of St Andrews supported the trip to Durham University to present this paper on the RAI First Annual Postgraduate Conference. The FURS (Foundation for Urban and Regional Studies) Studentship assists in making the further research of this project possible.

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Narrative beside the pitch

An ethnography of Thebans Rugby Football Club

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Abstract

Rugby Football Union originated in the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Originally developed to enhance physical masculinity, over the years it has received greater cultural significance as a mark of the British “gentleman”. Most of the studies on this sport focus on certain characteristics such as manhood, masculinity, male domination and power. Bearing these origins and characteristics in mind, I carried out five months fieldwork with Edinburgh’s gay friendly rugby football club, as one of their players, to explore where are they standing in current community of gays and lesbians. Standing on the pitch, I was able to identify a shift of focus on gay and lesbian movement: from standing out calling for equality to searching for re-merging back to local community.

Keywords

Rugby, masculinity, friendship, gentlemen, homosexuality

Introduction

The studies on rugby football share similar views on masculinity being at the core of the sport. One approach to the history of Rugby Football Clubs (RFCs) suggests the sport first started with the need for middle class men to participate in more physical tasks than their increasingly brain-centred activities allowed at work (Sheard and Dunning 1973: 6) to maintain their masculine image. RFCs appeared and existed as male only social places: women were only allowed to attend when they were invited (Dunning 1986: 84). In

addition, it is not until recently that women RFCs appeared (Mennesson and Clement 2003: 312). Therefore, rugby football is believed to be closely tied with the manliness and honour of being a Victorian “gentleman” (Nauright and Chandler 1996: 1). Its recent evolution into a worldwide, professional sport now connects individual achievement with group triumph and portrays teams as national warriors (Terret 1999: 74). Moreover, worldwide broadcasting of the Rugby World Cup has emphasised the highly competitive nature of modern rugby football (Hutchins and Phillips 1999: 150), in contrast to its early history, where the sport was organised privately within clubs (Sheard and Dunning 1973: 8).

Although there is little literature on gay men in competitive sports, descriptions of ritualised and traditional homosexual behaviours have been recounted by early social anthropologists (Weston 1993: 339). Evans-Pritchard (1970: 1429) describes the custom of bachelor soldiers taking a “boy wife” as both army trainee and to prevent adultery at Azande at Sudan before European rule was imposed. Knauff (1994) develops his argument on the relationship between different parts of the south Papua New Guinea male’s life. Herdt (1989) believes that when a young Melanesian boy was injected with sperm from an older boy that served as part of the process for him to obtain masculine recognition. Anthropologists started to take on studies of gay men and lesbians in western society in the 1960s.

Yet, many view gays and lesbians as “the other” people (Weston 1993: 339) and tend to consider that homosexuality functions apart from general society (Knauff 1994: 319). The expression of homosexual desire, according to Babb (2003), had been embedded in Nicaraguan society, which only came to the surface partly due to the revolution and partly because of the influence of the international movie industry (2003). However, men having sex with men still cannot shake off the stigma of being “incomplete men”. For some men in Nicaragua, although their descriptions of desire for other men can be found, it would

seem in their view that one can only consider oneself as a “true man” when one carries out penetration (Lancaster 1988). Among Martinician men, active gay men usually comment on passive partners as being comparable to heterosexual women (Murray 1999).

With a view to combining the two strands of my investigation—into rugby football history and practice, in particular, and attitudes to homosexuality in general—my fieldwork of Edinburgh’s gay friendly Rugby Football Club Thebans started on 24th January 2011 and lasted for about five months. During this period, I played for the club as a winger. Playing an active role in the team gave my presence more legitimacy (Adler and Adler 1987), and allowed me to participate in both their regular Saturday training at Duddingston Rugby pitch and in the social activities afterwards at The New Town Bar.

Two issues arise in relation to this particular ethnography. Firstly, how the concept of gentleman rugby playing and the purported values attached to it can interact with stereotypes of gay men. Secondly, in pursuit of rugby gentlemen spirits, how do they find a path to re-merge to local community? Do they, for instance, perceive themselves as Thebans, the famous Greek city guarded by gay warriors who fought together until death (Thebans RFC website 2011), as the club name, Thebans, indicates?

At this stage of my research, due to the limited time spent in fieldwork, this article only presents some salient findings, which are distinct from previous focuses in the subject. The discussion in this article attempts to show that one would find Thebans’ players work hard to present more RFC’s gentlemen characteristics than requesting equality for gay-lesbian community. This could be a clue for further investigation on their path of re-merge to local communities after the demolishing of criminal charges against homosexuality through the 2003 Sexual Offence Act and the legalisation of same-sex civil partnership in 2004.

Gentlemen's Respect

I would play with other teams, but I was always training with the Thebans. (Colin)

The first encounter with the Thebans was with their former captain, Colin, who offered some insights into what to expect from Thebans. During conversations, Colin constantly compared his own experience in other RFCs with that of Thebans. When it comes to his personal attachment to the Thebans, he chose to put it this way:

...Right, I was. But I wasn't just in the game with them. Never had that kind of connection with these people... I was always training with Thebans. Even now, when I am busy, I still keep friendships with many members, for a drink, or Facebook friends. They are my buddies, my men, you know.

Being a member of Thebans did offer experience similar to that of Colin's description. Despite the violent acts of tackle training (cf. Dundes 1978; Schacht 1996: 554), Thebans players presented more profound rugby characteristics derived from Victorian concepts of gentlemanly conduct (Nauright and Chandler 1996) in terms of mutual respect, care for each other, and tenderness to women. Taking the positive attitude to women and teammates rather than the usual bullying approaches one might find in professional Rugby Union FCs, it is hoped that this would encourage the re-union with local community.

During my first fieldwork with Thebans' training session, there was a short touch rugby match at the end. It ran quite well at first, but suddenly a team member for our side, Michael, rolled on the ground in front of me and held his right knee and with his face twisted in pain. Such an extreme reaction to the immediate injury showed that the player needed attention (Howe 2001: 294). Head coach Clark, and Ross, our captain, ran to take care of him.

While Michael was being treated, Gardiner, another team member, reassured to the team

that it was rare to have major injuries during rugby. Although contacts in rugby are normal (Chandler 1996:17), broken bones are not common according to Gardiner. Rooted in Oxbridge and seven public schools, members in the Rugby Union FC in the UK emphasise not only competitive masculinity, but also the notion of respect (Chandler 1996: 13).

Clark and Ross were attending Michael while he was in pain. Gardiner brought the rest of the team jogging toward the far end so that Michael had time to calm down and express his pain more openly. These actions from the leaders of the club displayed respect for privacy while others are in a weak position. In some early studies of rugby football, researchers focused on exploring masculinity through male physical power over the game and the role of females within RFC activities (cf. Sheard and Dunning 1973, Dundes 1978 and Dunning 1986). However, after being an active member in the Thebans RFC, I discovered the emphasis on respect for each other. This played a crucial role in tightening the relationships between club members, as being emotionally attached to one's teammates in the public is rare. They carefully hide their care for each other and their emotion for the club under their raw faces and masculine bodies. It is also similar to the Midlothian region's tradition of being gentle, quiet and hard on the outside but having a caring mind on the inside.

Players showed different attitudes when a training session included a female player, Julia. Clark insisted there would be no body contact or direct tackles whenever Julia was present. Such a statement regarding a female player in the club was paying regard to safety as well as placing the role of a woman in a different position, enhancing images of weakness often projected on them (Auster 2008: 313; Terret 1999: 66). Despite Julia's participation, however, one might accidentally hurt another even during training. It happened to Jocky, Fhaz and Julia one time. First Fhaz threw the ball too hard towards Julia, and Clark told him to apologise. Then Jocky in turn hurt Julia and Clark was not that cheerful this time:

Clark: You hit a girl?! Apologise!

Jocky: Sorry.

Clark: Can't hear you (said with teasing tone).

Jocky: "Sorry!" [He said it with his full strength and almost spilt the water bottle in his hands].

For others, Thebans' approach towards the idea of "respect" contradicted their idea of rugby. In the fifth training session, a guest who was playing for the Newcastle Raven RFC joined in. His name was Kevin. In Thebans, in tackling training, Michael and David would say sorry to the teammates they had just tackled. On the other hand, for Kevin, it is normal to tackle and in this particular situation, he was actually a bit upset when the tackler apologised to him. Therefore, Ross had to tell us not to say sorry when we tackled Kevin. Yet Michael could not help it and did it anyway:

Michael: Oops, sorry.

Kevin: Don't need to say sorry!

It seems to me, at least during the time I was training with the Thebans, they maintained the Oxbridge Rugby football tradition by showing healthy, capable bodies and were in accordance with received notions of gentlemanly conduct: polite, respect and supportive, towards each other (Chandler and Nauright 1999: 1) through the practice of gentlemen's mottos, courtesy and respect. These mottos do not display themselves automatically through masculine bodies nor are they expressed orally, but via actions. Although one might argue their interpretation of gentlemen's respect is perhaps against certain feminist ideologies, it is well received by Thebans' members.

Who is a Rugby Player?

Me, I like to play, but some of the members just want to get fit. (Colin)

Unlike other professional or university RFCs, which concentrate on the competitive sense of the sport (Nauright and Chandler 1996: 3), Thebans highlighted “we train at your own speed” in their introduction. During the first few sessions with the Thebans, it appeared to me this go-as-you-want attitude among members had caused some tensions between them. Many of the Thebans members joined for the idea of a rugby lifestyle, such as wearing club uniforms, hanging out at pubs. Rather few members were actually into the physical aspects of being in a RFC. This difference led to unavoidable conflicts regarding what one should expect from RFCs—be it training and booze or competing with each other.

A number of members I met in the Thebans believe that competition in a real game is the ultimate goal. This is largely correct if compared to the aims of the sport when invented back in Victorian times. In contrast, however, other members seemed to enjoy the fitness aspect but not the competitive part of rugby. During the interview, Colin recalled an incident while he was with Thebans. Portobello RFC was once playing against another club while the Thebans were training on the site. The Portobello captain asked Colin if any of the Thebans wanted to join in to make up the shortage of players. None of the Thebans members stepped forward.

In addition, occasionally one could find that these two groups of members liked to mark their territories and defend their positions towards one another while other members of the club were present. I was involved in one of these conversations:

Fhaz: You know, some people do take it seriously.

Mark: Well I don't think it's a serious thing, I mean it's a gay rugby game.

Dario: Why can't gay rugby be serious?

Mark: I didn't mean that, you know, I just come and get fit, I don't want to get all yelled at and things like that. Some of the guys in the team are really hard to play with, it's not like we are going to be professional or something

Fhaz: Some guys? You mean Ross? Yeah, he is kind of hard to play with, but he is the captain, he needs that everything is right.

Mark: Yes but...

Fhaz: Of course Ross is difficult a bit, because he is actually in the Portobello team, so he is all serious.

Dario: Well I am not in a place to comment.

It is no wonder that Mark and other members like him, who joined the team for the idea of a rugby lifestyle, generally dislike the harsh part of training, particularly when tournament dates get closer. For the other group of members, despite the courtesy and respect and play-as-you-want principle, which is highly emphasised in the club, the beauty of rugby seems to be embedded in the play: nicely avoiding tackles (Terret 1999: 66), displaying strength in the contact. Therefore, most members are very serious about their practice, especially when the Hardin Cup tournament was coming up. These, combined with their pride of being in Scotland's only gay RFC (Nauright and Chandler 1996: xxii, 9) and the hard work on the pitch (Light 1999: 113) make it worth training twice a week on a wet, muddy field.

With the conflicts between two groups of members in the club in mind, the club leaders paid high attention to discipline. Vice-captain Gardiner often texted members whenever they were absent from training. David, one of the keen rugby players once, who was half-teasing and half-serious, declared that my reasons for missing Thursday training were “unacceptable”. Jocky complained about Antonio, who joined the club with a fantasy of a rugby lifestyle, and his irresponsibility regarding safety in not getting a gum shield. Ross, the captain, had emphasised at the end of every training section in March that members had better push those whom they knew would not turn up for training. Assistant coach Kade, one of the oldest members in the club, was always yelling things at us like “don't stop boys”, “push yourself”, “you wanna be beat up by those guys?” displaying traditional rugby coach incentives towards his boys (Schacht 1996: 556) to make us run harder in drill

practice.

However, this does not mean that the Thebans RFC is only about training. After Saturday training, social scenes usually consist of a two-hour drinking session followed by supper, especially when it was a Six Nations Rugby week. Playing members and support members would usually get together during these social scenes at the New Town bar to watch games, discuss rugby technique, and show how much they are proud to be in the Thebans. When Kade explained the wearing of a t-shirt to me, it was hard to ignore his pride:

Kade: I am one of the few founders who still stay as a member.

Bowen: I talked to Colin the other day.

Kade: Ah yes, Colin...yeah I knew him.

Bowen: He said you guys won the union cup in '05?

Kade: Yes, we did. That's on my t-shirt.

Despite being non-professional and many of the players have little experience, but functioning as a big family, they genuinely consider sweaty bodies and muddy shirts as signs of good training sessions, after which they reward themselves a pint of beer in the pub just as those amateurs in the sport before its professionalisation and commercialisation (Nauright and Chandler 1996: xviii, xxiii, Hutchins and Phillips 1999: 151). They play rugby as a game to bind themselves together. It is the sense of being a team that they honour the most. Modern rugby football has remained a male dominated sport. It is not until quite recently (Wright and Clarke 1999: 229) that women have become involved in playing. Like many competitive team sports, rugby football concentrates on displaying physical and behavioural masculinity; it also presents itself negatively towards female and homosexual players (Sheard and Dunning 1973). Homophobia among managers and coaches can often be found in men as well as women RFCs (Mennesson and Clement 2003). The Thebans RFC, instead, is a gay/bisexual men friendly rugby football club. Its members have one thing in common other than a passion for rugby: it is their sexuality.

In contrast to non-gay RFC's domination and their denigration of female participation and homosexuality, the Thebans members merge their sexual identity into their training through using certain sexual connotations in their conversation. Even though they play for a gay friendly club, gay men all have a different cognitive map of their surroundings in which they map where it is safe for them to be themselves, and where is dangerous, based on their life experience (Brown 2006[2001]). During my time being with the Thebans, the club sometimes organised competitions with other gay friendly teams but, apparently, the idea of direct contact in training with non-gay male rugby teams made some of the team members worried:

Ross: I have talked to Portobello rugby club, do you guys mind training with the straights?

We: Yeah, well...

Michael: As long as they are not, homophobic.

Ross: Most of them don't care, as long as you can play.

Michael: Bring them on then.

If other RFCs do not care about sexuality, it could mean that they are open enough to welcome homosexual players. Alternatively, based on some members' views, it can be ignorance on their part of part of their lives. Colin indicated during the interview that it was a common practice. According to Colin, at the time he was actively playing for Portobello RFC, a semi-professional club in Edinburgh, team members' conversations were limited to rugby, politics and training, rarely involving family and relationships. However, for Thebans, using Kade's words, the club and its members were "helping each other go through different stages in life." This statement points to what many of its members believe is the reason why after ten years Thebans is still together, - that is the unconditional support, on and off the pitch, which draws in many gay men in the central belt area to take part in the club. Playing on the pitch they are battling with competitors, off the pitch they support their mates through the battles of being a gay man. Considering the purpose of

rugby - sport, training and physical and supportive male companionship - from this perspective, a rugby club makes its members give unconditional support to each like soldiers in a battle. For Thebans' players their lives are their battlefield (Mangan 1996: 141); they only have each other to rely on.

Here to Win

Is Thebans merely about training? Despite the fact that training constituted a large part of my fieldwork with Thebans, they do participate in several fixtures with other RFCs from Newcastle, Bristol and their annual participation in Union Cup (a worldwide gay Rugby Union competition). According to the coach journal provided by Colin, the Thebans have not won very frequently after their major accomplishment in the Union Cup in 2005, in which they were in the top three among all the participating RFCs. However, the club presents itself to be more interested in playing in “friendship games” against other gay friendly RFCs, rather than participating in local competitions. Can one conclude that winning is not on the priority list of Thebans' agenda? Two examples illustrate otherwise.

The first example happened during a charity sports day, which was hosted by the Edinburgh University LGBT society. Being a gay rugby club, the Thebans were asked to send its members to represent diverse participation in sports among the LGBT community. Therefore, Michael, Fhaz, Jonathan, and I attended.

It was a rainy day, typical for Edinburgh weather. The weather made it less likely for the event to attract many participants. Four of the club members including myself played touch rugby with members from other sports clubs for several hours. Later on, we joined the leisure games that were hosted by the LGBT society. At the end the small representation of Thebans won the tug of war, and stood together holding “gold” medals. Thebans' Facebook page was covered with compliments and proud members' comments soon after the photos were uploaded.

Another example indicates that winning is important for the club. A couple of months later, I heard through Facebook that the Thebans beat Newcastle Ravens RFC and won their first game in six years. Later at the Rugby clinic 2011, a nationwide gay friendly RFC tournament hosted by Thebans annually, the Thebans came placed second. These all indicate the 2011-2012 season could be a refreshing start for the club. This came from Kade, one of the founders of the RFC who is still active in the team. We had a brief conversation during which I congratulated him on the recent big win against Newcastle (110 to 12). I could spot the joy on his face:

I was surprised, but we really need it. It has been quite a while since we won last time. The boys need it, the Thebans needs it. And it was not a small win, we almost scored over 100 against Newcastle, which is our old competitor. (Kade)

Conclusion

I spent merely five months with Thebans and the fact that it was an ethnographic practice at home and would stir if my conclusion romanticised the friendship, gentlemanly courtesy and the roles that rugby as a lifestyle in assisting LGBT group reunion with their local community. While preparing my field notes for this ethnography, the gestures of tolerance, friendship, respect and acceptance that my fellow teammates shared among each other struck me the most. Thebans carefully balance the relationship between their passion for winning a fixture and their enthusiasm simply for having a rugby lifestyle. In a way, the name of the team, the Thebans is a true metaphor of their masculinity, just as with the warriors in Thebes, fighting together, accepting each other, standing by each other in life and on the pitch, until the end.

This ethnography only involves five months of participant observation with one gay rugby club and without data from other non-gay rugby clubs. On the other hand, the Thebans as a club intends to display openness, therefore the age, attitudes of its players are variable, while other gay RFCs might present otherwise such as those from Manchester, London and

Sydney. Therefore, it is insufficient to generalise that courtesy respect, friendship and observing principles are a crucial part of all gay sports societies. It would be equally unaccountable to declare that the above points derived from the fieldwork cannot be found in non-gay rugby clubs. If any satisfactory conclusion is to be drawn, longer and deeper fieldwork will be needed.

During the fieldwork period, however, dedication of Thebans on pursuing rugby spirits presented evidence on a new trend of the gay and lesbian movement. Western social scientists began to turn research attention to gays and lesbians in the 1960s when equal rights activities were blossoming. Half a century has passed, with the removal of criminal charges against homosexual behaviour and the recognition of same sex partnerships, positive discussion of same sex marriage in Britain, this community expands its focus and revises its methods. Rather than relying on direct confrontations with opponents, more societies with a gay and lesbian background choose to display the similarities their lives, hobbies with other groups, apart from sexual preference. Thebans is one such society. Through engaging in competitions, the club intends to send out a message: we are rugby playing gentlemen; our sexuality does not change that.

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RESEARCH NOTE

Ways of being

Ideas of maleness and femaleness in a Port Moresby Settlement

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/hukula2012.pdf>

Abstract

This article presents the concepts of gender and violence in the context of an urban settlement in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. I discuss how the ideas of maleness and femaleness engage with the notions of sociality and violence. I use every day talk to describe the ways in which the settlement dwellers described their ways of being male and female. I outline some of these characteristics and then discuss how changing forms of gender interacts with violence and how understandings of violence may differ from the human rights espoused by non-government organisations. By drawing upon ethnographic examples, this article highlight the violence based on the notion of relationality.

Keywords

gender violence, sociality, urban settlement, Papua New Guinea

The old and the new: all mixed up as one

In the fast changing modern city of Port Moresby, the ways of thinking about gender are both continually reinforced and reconfigured. These changing forms of gender relations guide the ideas about maleness, femaleness, and the ways of being. Older forms of division of labour and the ideas of maleness and femaleness ensure that in a contemporary context, women and girls are expected to be able to perform domestic duties such as cooking and

cleaning while men and boys are encouraged to be protectors and providers for the family. These gender-defined ways of being were a constant and familiar feature of daily life throughout my stay in an urban settlement at Nine Mile, Port Moresby.

A mundane example of these changes to contemporary social action and gender thinking is evident in the fact that the man is not always the breadwinner of the family. Therefore, ‘bread-winning women’, or known as the main ‘provider’ are considered as strong women. For instance, a friend of mine who supported her family financially while her husband was unemployed would often say to me: ‘I don’t get paid much working as a *haus meri* (domestic house cleaner) but it’s for the kids, as long as I get a little money to buy their tinned fish and rice’. Another friend, Karen, whose husband was also unemployed, had a different view of her current situation:

‘I married John in the year 2000 and for six years he didn’t have a job, I should have dumped him and married someone else like my sisters in the street are doing, but I am a strong woman and I am still with him’.

This shows mixing of two different ways—old and new—of being a ‘strong’ woman. The new figure of woman as the ‘provider’ is in some way emulating the male role, but can also be seen as emulating the old female figure where the woman along with the man is expected to be a provider. It is the man’s diminished role that is important—women were also providers, but in such examples, the relational balance has changed.

In addition to the changing roles of women, new ideas of being a man complement and challenge the old ideas of maleness. NGO campaigns advocating for the eradication of violence against women portray the non-violent unaggressive man as the ideal type. Priests and pastors who urge their congregations to adhere to Christian principles of love and respect also espouse similar notions and ideals from the pulpit. Men in the settlement are in a paradoxical situation where new ways of gaining respect and maybe even being seen as a

leader as well challenges the normative assumption of the Melanesian man. These new ideas of maleness are often in conflict with older or traditional concepts of gender relations, thus conflicts arise when people come to take on new roles or find their actions played out in new relations.

Violence and changing relations

These new ways of thinking about roles and responsibilities of men and women therefore arise in the context of new forms of social action and consequently have different effects on the relations between men and women, with violence often being one of the avenues through which these changes are being enacted and negotiated. Gender violence, changing gender roles, modernity, and male domination in Papua New Guinea have been rigorously analysed (MacIntyre 2000; Spark 2010; Strathern 1988; Toft 1985). Much of the discourse about gender violence points to theories of male domination, modernity and power relations. In an effort to provide an alternate explanation, I contend that there is a need to consider the relational aspect of persons affected and affecting violence. In this article, I shall focus only on the violence between husbands and wives as a unit of analysis.

How can we analytically account for domestic violence in contemporary Port Moresby? If gender is relationally derived, in which social attributes gain definition from one's own actions and equally the actions of others, then I propose that some acts of violence occur when one party perceives that the other is acting in a way that redefines the relations and their own part in it. For a woman to be a wife, it is required that a man acts as a husband: in these conceptualisations, social identities or attributes are relationally and mutually constituted, as much an artefact of one's own actions as they are the result of others. The fights between couples can occur because one or both parties act in a relationally inappropriate manner and this in turn characterises their performance of gender. For example, a married man who continually spends large amounts of money on a woman who is not his wife or immediate kin is bound to arouse suspicion. When I asked why men

and women fight, my friend Karen shrugged her shoulders and said: *'Mekim lo action tasol, na em bai save-hard lo toktok ya'* (Show it by action, it's hard to talk):

I don't like to talk or argue as I will get beaten up; instead I show my frustration or my unhappiness with my [husband's] behaviour by sitting on the road and playing cards. Then when he gets angry and tries to argue and fight with me, I tell him well you go and spend all your money drinking beer; when you should be buying food for the family, so why should I cook and clean? I will go and play cards on the street.

Karen's husband John, who is also my friend and an active NGO volunteer and community mobiliser, said:

It's hard, I know about human rights and woman's rights but I get really frustrated when I come home from work to find my wife out on the road gambling and the house is a mess. She expects me to do my part as the head of the family and I expect her to do her part too.

This story reflects the relational consequences of a person acting the way in which one is expected to act. Karen thinks that by spending his money on beer John does not act as a husband and a father should do, and that is the reason why she shows her disapproval by not carrying out her domestic duties or behaving like a 'proper' wife or mother. Marilyn Strathern surmises:

...if the wife is the agent, the one who acts, then her husband is the cause of her acting, though not himself active. It is simply in reference to him that the wife acts. (Strathern 1998: 272)

As above, I contend that persons are relationally constituted. Therefore, in some instances of violence between husbands and wives, the act of violence is directed to address, perhaps reciprocate the mutual consequences of action in a relation. Karen's defiance was intended as a protest at John's drinking and illustrates one of the ways women in the block

deal with husbands and with violence: some women choose to fight back; others choose to ‘mekim action’ by leaving their husbands or going to stay with relatives. Husbands such as John might either continue drinking or take a break from drinking to appease their wives. In many ways, this continuous exchange of action by a man and a woman is resonant with Bateson’s (1936) theory of schismogenesis outlined in *Naven*—whereby rivalry between parties elicits similar or symmetrical behaviour. In this case, the more a husband drinks, the more his wife defiantly gambles.

Another interesting example is the story of Wally, Watson and Rita. Wally, Watson and Rita were once entangled in a love triangle. Rita and Wally grew up together in the settlement, were in a relationship, and had a daughter together. Wally left the settlement for a long time leaving Rita and their daughter in Port Moresby. While Wally was away, Rita entered into a relationship with Watson and both started living together after getting married. Wally returned to the block in 2009, and Wally and Rita consequently resumed their relationship. In February 2010, a drunken Watson was “encouraged” by his friends to confront Wally and Rita. Watson had finished work and came to the settlement saying that he had come to cause trouble, so with “encouraging” words from some fellow drunkards, Watson set about looking for Wally and Rita. He eventually found Watson and Rita together and grazed Wally’s arm with a bush knife. Wally and Rita managed to escape. However, Wally with his grazed arm stood in a dark place and waited for Watson to walk by so he could retaliate. As Watson passed Wally, Wally raised the weapon he was holding and dealt Watson a deadly blow on the head, which subsequently killed him.

In offering an analysis of this story that focuses on a relational explanation of actions I take my point of reference from those whose intellectual enquiry into sex, violence and gender have been from the standpoint of understanding violence as an effect of social relations rather than an act of individual pathology (Harvey and Gow 1994) and more specifically to Melanesia, where Marilyn Strathern posits that Melanesian notions of gender are

inherently relational: that is they attend to actions-what a person, object or even sexual organ is doing-rather than the attributes or properties of biology and sex (Strathern 1998:128).

Various members of the community inferred that the infidelity of Wally and Rita caused Watson as a husband to act like this. Wally acted with Rita as he felt that it was rightful to resume his relationship with Rita as he has a child with her, therefore he viewed her as his wife. Although grounded on different bases both men considered themselves to be Rita's husband and refused to accept that the other man was the husband. Some of the members of the community that I spoke to after the event believed that Rita should be arrested and charged as an accessory to murder because one man was killed and another was arrested for murder due to her indecisiveness.

From one perspective, though, this seems to be shifting the blame to Rita for Wally's actions and Watson's bad fortune. However, from another perspective this can be explained through the situation of violence between couples. During my stay in the field, although I saw and heard of sporadic episodes of such violence between men and women-what was at stake was fights between persons as a husband and a wife. Interpretations relying on individual biological propensities of sexual attributes would miss these important points. As further evidence of these explanations, I also saw and heard couples getting into violent arguments and fights and yet the next day I saw the same couple walking to the bus stop together. Upon enquiry as to what actions were taken by the victim (usually the woman), I was often told that '*em fight blo wanpla dei*' (it is a fight for one day). Is it ignorance of the law, lack of resources to get out of marriages, or a fear that kept women in a state of apathy when it comes to dealing with issues of violence? It seems like that the '*fight blo wanpla dei*' have the same sorts of connotations such as that described by Karen in terms of 'showing by action'. I suggest that the conceptual logic of reciprocity or schismogenesis addresses the relational consequences of earlier actions with the object of restoring a relation aligned

with expectations.

In the settlement where I lived and worked in, various NGOs and INGOs have conducted awareness campaigns, trainings and workshops on gender violence, children rights and human rights funded by donors such as AusAID and the United Nations. There is also a continuous attempt to build awareness about violence against women in the local media. I found that people in the block have some knowledge of these issues and are aware that there are laws in place to protect women and children from violence. However, translating this knowledge into practice is not always so easy. I observed during the fieldwork that the ways in which people respond and react to violence is contradictory to the development oriented awareness campaigns espoused by donors, women's rights activists and NGOs. In considering these local realities, I suggest NGOs working to tackle the issue of gender violence to consider a strategy that moves away from the conventional gender empowerment and inequality rhetoric. It must focus on a campaign that emphasises the importance of relations between people to highlight cultural understandings of what it is to be a man or woman, male and female, husband or wife.

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COMMENT

Varieties of openness and types of digital anthropology

Avoiding confusion in discussing Danny Miller

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Editorial note added in March 2013: this paper was written in August 2012 in response to Miller. We note how in the UK the topic has become more salient following HEFCE's proposals to make open access (more or less mandatory). We have not attempted to address that specific topic here but survey some of the many different meanings that the word open can be associated with in order to help clarify the discussion.

We find Danny Miller's recent article in *Hau* ([Miller 2012](#)) interesting and provocative (as ever in Miller's work) but it confuses several issues which are best considered separately. Miller advocates a model of openness in publication which sees a move away from commercial, profit driven organisations being in control of academic publishing. He argues that openness should not mean an abandonment of the peer review process. The issue of open publication is, however, far from simple. The ideal model espoused by Miller and roundly endorsed by most of the commentators to his discussion piece is one with which, in principle we suspect, few academics would care to disagree. Who would not welcome a

world in which rigorously vetted, credible knowledge was made freely available to everyone? There are however real constraints on the model proposed by Miller, not least of which is the fact that open publication means a number of different things and Miller only touches on a small part of the problem. Open publication can indeed refer to publications which are free from charge to the reader at the point of use. It might also refer to publication which is free of peer review. This is excluded by Miller as undesirable. Open may also refer to the status of documents for re-use. Miller's paper also raises the issue of language hegemony in which large parts of the world are excluded from the highest ranked academic journals because they are not able to write in English to a sufficiently high standard. Online publication, while not automatically 'open' and certainly not necessarily free at the point of use, is offered as an important part of the solution to the problem of the evils of closed access, commercially driven publishing interests.

In summary 'Open Publication' can mean any of the following. Publication which is

- Free of money / subscription at point of use
- Free of peer review
- Free of editorial input/intervention
- Free for reuse – licenses and copyright
- Freely available online

Often suggested or criticised in combination, for clarity the topics are best discussed separately. In the following we shall briefly summarise the key issues under each heading, then add further comments on extraneous topics (language hegemony, open software and digital anthropology) which Miller and his commentators added to the discussion but which are strictly independent from discussion of Open Publication.

Relations with Commerce

Publishing has costs – maintaining websites, or old fashioned printing, maintaining lists of subscribers even if they are not paying subscribers, all takes time so needs people rich enough to be able to volunteer if they are not to be paid. Someone (often some institution) has to pay electricity bills and maintain the hardware.

There are real costs associated with academic publishing. Maintaining websites or old fashioned printing services are not cost free. Maintaining lists of subscribers costs someone's time even if they are not paying subscribers. Copy editing and proof reading are often unacknowledged, but are an important part of the process of silently and invisibly helping readers. We have been associated with a number of big publishers over the years and the difference between 'full service' publishers and the 'DIY' model is clear. The *Anthropological Index Online (AIO)* operates on a shareware model of publication. We receive funding directly from our heavy institutional users which subsidises the costs associated with indexing of the journals. Much of the website development and maintenance is done by our colleague, Janet Bagg, at the University of Kent. The vast majority of her time is volunteered. As the former and current Honorary Editors of the AIO, DZ and SL receive no subsidy for their involvement in the project, yet, the role incurs costs especially in time. As the Editor in Chief of the *Durham Anthropology Journal*, SL had either to do all the copy editing, proof reading and web rendering himself or persuade unpaid postgraduate students that this was an important training opportunity which would look good on their CV. Even when he was able to find suitably qualified postgraduate students there was always a considerable amount of nuts and bolts training required. Earlier, when SL was a postgraduate student at the University of Kent working with DZ on a web based dissemination project, he received such training and provided a mix of voluntary and paid service to prepare content for the project websites. When these instances are compared with SL's experiences with *History and Anthropology*, a Routledge published journal, it is clear that there is a very different level of service provided. Routledge, and other major

publishers, charge what appear at first to be staggering sums of money for institutional journal subscriptions. When broken down by individual user, these sums are not so extraordinarily high, but that is somewhat irrelevant. The real issue is about the costs of publishing and the amounts of money generated. Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, Wiley-Blackwell and others do not make 'obscene' profits from Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities publishing. The real profits seem to come from the hard sciences where the economics seem to be quite different. There seem to be different rules based on the amounts of money at play.

Moreover, we are still in need of old fashioned occupations such as copy editing and proof reading which are often unacknowledged but which silently invisibly help readers. If publishers are to be abolished (not what Miller is advocating) then many of their functions will have to be reinvented. Miller will be the first to point out that as University Presses have become more commercial in outlook one of the casualties has been copy editing. We share the concern but do not see how a move to open publication addresses the point.

It should also be pointed out that commerce and open publication are not necessarily incompatible. One of the models being explored in hard sciences and elsewhere is the 'author-pays' model where rather than the reader or their institution paying the author pays the publisher for the work in preparing the work for distribution. One of the commercial publishers who are using this model in the social sciences is Bentham, the publishers of the *Open Anthropology Journal* (<http://www.benthamscience.com/open/toanthj/>) who currently (July 2012) charge authors \$800 per article, thus erecting a different barrier preventing our colleagues in developing world countries from publishing. The 'Author Pays' model also allows the possibility of different levels of payment for different types of access within the same journal. So a single issue of a journal (possibly published by a large commercial publisher) could have some articles freely available and

others hidden behind a paywall (actually examples of this already exist). This is a real world type of hybridity that confuses the neatness of some of purist arguments for openness.

Other models: There are other hybrid models available which deserve much more discussion in anthropology. For example, the free (open) online journal *Sociological Research Online* is free for private individuals and yet it charges institutions annual subscriptions to cover the production costs. The RAI's online bibliographic publication the *Anthropological Index Online* has a similar model inspired by shareware licenses for software: access is free to those in developing world countries and for academic institutions making only light use, but commercial or heavy academic use requires a subscription. Reports from Research Information Network et al. (2010 and 2011) discuss the wider picture (as do Kelty et al. 2008).

As we understand it, Elsevier etc don't make their 'obscene' profits from Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities publishing but from the Hard Sciences where the economics seem quite different. Different rules apply where there are big bucks in play.

Consider the three main anthropology publications, *Current Anthropology* (CA), *American Anthropologist* (AA) and the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (JRAI)¹, are all subsidised in different ways. JRAI by the Royal Anthropological Institute and AA by the American Anthropological Association. The RAI and the AAA, as learned societies, are not profit making organisations like Elsevier although they have chosen in recent years to publish their journals in association with Wiley-Blackwell, another commercial publisher. The AAA, with more than 10,000 dues paying members, is in a position to subsidise its flagship journal, but even within the AAA the costs of publishing are placing considerable strain on the organisation. A recent AAA survey was clearly testing the mood of the membership for increased membership dues as a possible route towards greater access at point of use. The

¹ This list is, of course, open to argument.

message was explicit-- 'free' at point of use does *not* mean the costs associated with publishing go away.

Finally in this section it is worth reporting that there are several initiatives to make the contents of academic journal articles available to those in institutions who cannot afford them. Initiatives such as the JSTOR [Developing Nations Access Initiative](http://about.jstor.org/libraries/developing-nations-access-initiative),² Hinari and Inasp have made much of the work published in academic journals available without cost to academics with internet connections (an increasing number) in developing world countries. The admitted irony is that at the same time many citizens in north America and Europe do not have access to them without the bother of visiting a public library and possibly paying an interlibrary loan fee.

‘Information wants to be free’³

The slogan has been used by those in the so-called ‘open data movement’ to which Miller does not refer. Moreover, in the hard sciences as well as calling for open publication, the activists are calling for open data so that, in principle, people can inspect the data which their taxes paid for and on which publication X is based. The nearest equivalent in anthropology has been moves to promote the archiving of fieldnotes so (probably long after the material has been collected) others can see *some* of the material on the basis on which published work has been produced. By and large such these attempts in anthropology have been resounding failures. Anthropologists are incredibly possessive about their field material even up to the grave (see Zeitlyn 2012). We are not clear where Miller stands on this.

² <http://about.jstor.org/libraries/developing-nations-access-initiative>

³ See <http://www.rogerclarke.com/II/IWtbF.html> for discussion of source of the quote.

Freedom from the Tyranny of Peer Review

This is absolutely not what Miller advocates but is another type of open publication. Allegedly, peer review slows publication down to a crawl because academics are too busy writing and researching to respond to requests for peer review. More than that peer review stifles radical new thinking by inhibiting innovation. The results is a type of ‘reversion to the bland’ in which authors parrot currently fashionable jargon in order to enter the mainstream and overcome the barrier of peer review. (Allegedly similar problems afflict funding decisions.) Miller is all for scholarly rigour (who wouldn’t be? An answer from another discipline would be Paul Feyerabend). There are ways of addressing scholarly rigour without the choking effects of old-style peer review. One is Open Peer Review. On this model an article once submitted to a journal is placed on the Peer Review part of the journal website for a limited period (perhaps 3 or 6 months?). During this time any reader can submit a review. At the completion of the review period the editor considers the reviews submitted and decides whether to publish or not (just as currently happens). If no reviews are submitted the editors may decide to accept anyway or leave the article pending until reviews are received.

Another model is Post Publication Open Peer Review: similar to the above but a journal has a peer reviewed and a non peer reviewed section. The editors vet submissions for minimal quality standards which, if passed, enable an article to be placed in the unreviewed section. After a year (say) the article may be promoted to the peer reviewed section if enough positive reviews are received. Note we have been deliberately ambiguous about whether the reviews themselves should be made accessible to other readers. One of the intriguing things about post publication peer review is that it provides a route where a form of ‘Current Anthropology Comment’ could be generated and generalised. For a year or six months following publication readers could post comments on an article. After that the author can reply and the article with comments and reply packaged together. All of this

could be done within the framework of an online journal with the editors ensuring that comments are relevant and polite etc.

Free of editorial input/intervention – this is really the point about copy-editing already made above. Some authors may feel their prose is so good it cannot be improved. However, as readers, we are often exasperated by the self indulgence and lack of clarity of writers whose prose has not been challenged by their editors.

Free for reuse – licenses and copyright.

Oddly questions of copyright loom little in anthropology partly, we suggest, because there is so little money at stake. (And because most employed anthropologists such as Miller conspire with their employers to overlook that in strict legal terms they do not own their own writings). In software development there are millions (occasionally billions) to be made, so Stallman's 'hack' of copyright which was (contentiously) the origin of the open licenses now widely used is less radical than it has been in computing. We note an interesting tension between promoting non-commercial Creative Commons licenses which encourages distribution and reuse (taken up by some anthropologists) with movements to recognise indigenous IPR in creative creations and traditional knowledge (particularly pharmaceutical) which have been taken up by other anthropologists and WIPO (see discussion of a non-pharmaceutical case-in-point in Noble 2007). The latter assumes the possibility that knowledge can be owned which those inspired by Stallman must repudiate.

Freely available online journals

The development of the internet and in particular the explosion of the World Wide Web means that relatively low cost electronic only publication has been possible for almost twenty years (at the time of writing). There is a considerable history of online publication relevant to anthropology which goes back long before the open publication movement got

started (and long before the Savage Minds blog started). As editors of AIO (previous and current) we have been monitoring this for a long time.⁴

Overall it seems that most attempts at online publications become moribund very quickly. One such which DZ was involved in, CSACSA, is sadly a case in point. But there's nothing special about online publication in this: conventional paper-based journals also become moribund and cease publication. Within UK anthropology consider Hau's elder sister 'Cambridge Anthropology' which has just emerged from several years of morbidity as a subscription-only journal with a commercial publisher. In Oxford, the departmental journal, JASO, had become moribund until it was revived as a free online publication in 2009.⁵ Hau is an interesting experiment since it has addressed status issues from the start and has heavily promoted the symbolic capital inherent in its editorial board.

Among the successful precedents for Miller to consider are two online journals publishing in closely related fields with considerable overlap with social anthropology: *SRO Sociological Research Online* (www.socresonline.org.uk/) was launched in March 1996 with an editorial board chaired by Professor Nigel Gilbert at the University of Surrey. Based in Berlin is *FQS - Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (ISSN 1438-5627) <http://www.qualitative-research.net/> a peer-reviewed multilingual online journal for qualitative research established in 1999. It publishes articles in English, German and Spanish. Miller's article and the discussants to it raise three other topics which are strictly quite separate from those to do with open publication.

⁴ AIO Editorial board first discussed indexing online journals in 2002 and kept returning to the subject until in 2010 it finally agreed as a matter of principle to consider including electronic online journals (in summary treating them in exactly the same way as other candidates for inclusion).

⁵ See <http://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/publications/JASO/>. Note on licenses: when JASO went online we copied all the copyright statements across so copyright is held by the Anthropological Society of Oxford. However, should an author request it there would be no objection to publishing under a Creative Common License such as is used by *Hau*.

Language hegemony

The issue applies to publishing generally, particularly academic publishing whether or not it is commercial subsidised or open. That said online publication can be used to address or mitigate some of the issues since it is possible/ economic to publish multiple versions online – so the internet presents a viable response to the concerns of non-English speakers (see *FQS* mentioned above for a working example of this approach). Turning to specifics: Hau can make a gesture: at the very least it can insist in multilingual abstracts for all its articles (and if a linguistically challenged anglophone cannot speak the required languages then perhaps the author should pay the translation costs to remind them that there are many hidden costs in publication.) If this suggestion is adopted we do wonder which are the appropriate languages to choose? English, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic? Sadly for Fausto we suspect not Portuguese. Hindi perhaps. Turning to Africa, the plethora of choice available reveals the problems implicit in choosing any small set of languages. Tempting though it is for DZ to write in Mambila: *ma mì nyare le ʒu Ba, bɔ̀ nùàr kuku ɲwe ɲwé.*

We don't think any of the commentators are seriously advocating a return to Latin (once the universal language of academe) or a switch to Esperanto – so everyone is at an equal disadvantage. It is one thing to complain that CA, AA, JRAI discriminate against people writing in their 2nd or 3rd language (readers should note that CA is very clear that they will review articles written in languages other than English) but this doesn't really work when we think about scholarship in the seriously small languages. Not the metropolitan languages of Europe (and its erstwhile colonial diasporas) with speaker communities (and readerships) in the millions but those with less than a few hundred thousand speakers.

Hidden Economics in Open Software: why it is a bad model for anthropology

One of the issues that Kelty does not discuss in *Two Bits* (2008) is the money! The question 'Who's paying for all this?' is all the more interesting for the disavowals of its importance made by the key players. Richard Stallman has a MacArthur Genius fellowship so can

afford not to care, he has been ‘free’ to develop GNU (which provided much of the software surrounding the Linux kernel) without having to worry about board, lodging and electricity bills. It is clear that repositories such as SourceForge have resource implications. Who pays for these? Such repositories are subsidised by the very commercial interests that the hardcore Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) people object to, principally Sun and IBM. There are of course countless volunteers who provide code freely. No doubt their motivation for such contributions are diverse, but must include abstracted notions of the Maussian gift, though exactly who the recipient of these *prestations* may be remains somewhat unclear (see Kastrinou and Lyon forthcoming and earlier discussions by e.g. Kelty 2002 and Zeitlyn 2003). The volunteer army of FOSS coders are not evenly distributed around the planet. The distribution of programmers wealthy enough to have the time and resources to contribute differs dramatically in different parts of the world. Trinidad, for example, may be home to avid mobile phone users, but there is little evidence to suggest that any residents of Trinidad are significant contributors the Stallman's revolutionary software design model. There aren't enough Trinidadian programmers interested enough *and* rich enough (both are needed) to be able to afford to contribute. This is an economic explanation of why so few programmers from developing world countries are significant contributors to open software development. In our view this reflects very basic economic hegemony.

Within anthropology neither Keith Hart nor Fran Barone are paid to keep the Open Anthropology Cooperative website going. Fran Barone's main technical work on OAC was while she was completing her PhD. Such sacrifice is noble and to be commended, but it should not disguise the fact that publishing, even online, incurs costs, especially labour costs. (Editorial note: this paragraph revised on 29 March 2013).

Digital Anthropology

There is no necessary connection between open and digital anthropology: strictly each is independent of the other, (although the open software movement has been studied by anthropologists such as Kelty (2008)). In the context we find Miller's promotion of the collection that he and Horst have edited to be ironic since it is not available to us (or Hau's commentators) and will be published by a commercial publisher under an old style commercial license like all Miller's other publications to date. A cynical reader might even be inclined to see the timing of this piece as an exploitation of open source publication in order to promote the commercial publication of an edited collection by Horst and Miller (slated for publication on 1 Oct 2012 so early readers of the Hau piece cannot know what they have said). One wonders why, if they are so keen on Open Source publication, they have chosen to disseminate their work via a commercial publisher? If so keen on it why not at the very least publish with Sean Kingston, since Miller spends so much of the piece praising his initiative? Although it should be pointed out that Sean Kingston Books is a commercial *print-on-demand* publisher which is not the same as an open access publisher. None of the SKB books are available full-text online and all appear to be published with a conventional copyright license.

Leaving this aside we would like to take the opportunity to reflect briefly on digital anthropology. It has a profound ambiguity similar to that in the phrase 'visual anthropology'. Does digital anthropology mean 1. the study of people who use digital technology or 2. the use of digital technology to assist anthropological research? (Combinations of the two, of course, are possible). This parallels VA's ambiguity between the use of visual methods to do anthropology and the anthropological study of visual material.

To make the point clearer it is conceptually possible to study and publish the results of, for example, an online community of role playing gamers in which 'the data' have been

recorded in paper based fieldnotes and the publications are entirely conventional. Indeed Chris Kelty's work (both his doctoral study of the development and introduction of digital X-rays in US Hospitals (1999) and his more recent study of the open source software movement (2008) are conventional anthropology in the best possible sense. We suspect that his main data types are observation and discussion recorded in fieldnotes complemented by correspondence (aka email and chat).

This is quite different from the use of digital technologies by anthropologists to study 'conventional' anthropological topics such as kinship and then to disseminate the results. Software packages such as Puck, Silkin, Kinoath and Kinship editor⁶ provide tools to assist anthropologists to record and analyse the complex types of data that have been challenging anthropology since Morgan in the nineteenth century (see for example Fischer and Read 2005; Hamberger et al 2011; Houseman and White 1998a; 1998b; Lyon and Magliveras 2006; Read and Behrens 1990; Read 2001; 2006). In other fields, social network analysis (not to be confused with actor network theory) was pioneered by social anthropologists and now has many digital tools available to help collate and analyse networks (see Atran et al 2006; Borgatti et al 2009; Henig 2012; Kuznar 2007; White et al 1999; White and Johansen 2004). The same or similar tools also provide means to disseminate, share and collaborate. In the UK the University of Kent's CSAC pioneered using the internet to disseminate the results of conventional anthropological research and promoted the use of new (then) digital technologies in doing anthropology (see lucy.kent.ac.uk and era.anthropology.ac.uk). As an early participant in this Stephen Lyon was able (with some difficulty) to make versions of his fieldnotes available⁷ as the doctoral fieldwork progressed (1998-1999), several years before the term blog had been popularised.

⁶ <http://code.google.com/p/silkin/>, <http://sourceforge.net/projects/simpa-puck/>, <http://www.lat-mpi.eu/tools/tools/kinoath> and <http://sourceforge.net/projects/kinshipeditor/>

⁷ http://era.anthropology.ac.uk/era_resources/era/slyon/

We hope that the editors of *Hau* and of other online publications (whether or not using open publication models) will consider some of the practical suggestions we have made about promoting wider access and freer discussion, independent of some of the more polemical issues which surround the politics of academic publication.

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BOOK REVIEW

Alexiades, Miguel N. ed. 2009. *Mobility and migration in indigenous Amazonia: Contemporary ethnoecological perspectives*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Reviewed by
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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/khalid2012.pdf>

The study of environment is one that is pertinent to a wide array of different disciplines, each carrying its own set of specialised approaches, ranging from geology to biology. In much a similar vein, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists study humans through the lens of a specific set of theories and viewpoints. It thus follows on that the study of the complex and dynamic human-environment relationship would require an interdisciplinary approach (Moran 1993: 141-144). It is, in the same way, difficult to study mobility and migration without involving social, geographic and biological perspectives. The eleventh volume in the *Studies in Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology* series, titled *Mobility and Migration in Indigenous Amazonia*, although mainly informed by anthropological perspectives, also entertains an interdisciplinary approach. The book is a collection of eleven essays by scholars from diverse fields such as anthropology, botany, ecology and development.

Mobility and Migration is edited by Miguel Alexiades, an ethnobotanist and environmental anthropologist. In an introductory chapter, Alexiades orients us with the history of indigenous populations in Amazonia. This overview provides much-needed context, informing the reader of key events that have shaped the current environment such as colonial conquest, patterns of migration and forms of human contact with plant species, as well as resulting ecological shifts.

The volume challenges the modern scholarly assumption that indigenous populations are ‘historically emplaced’ (p. 1) and in a state of ‘spatial stasis’ (p. 2). In fact, as Alexiades asserts, indigenous societies are highly mobile. This mobility can work in unprecedented ways. For example, Conrad Feather experienced frustration in his research with the Nahua, for whom travel was undertaken with little thought or planning. Feather reports waking in the morning to find Shico, the father in his household, leaving for a town more than three weeks away by raft and foot. When asked about his possible time of returning, he told Feather with worrying casualness that he might be back in a year or two (p. 69). Similarly, Feather encountered problems with conducting sustained fieldwork since participants often disappeared on lengthy trips just as he was beginning to develop rapport (p.73). This idea of mobility and migration forms the main underlying thrust of the volume, and ethnographic examples such as the one related by Feather are key to understanding how such practices become problematised within the Amazonian context. Simultaneously, the book aims to examine the multiple and varied ways in which migrating indigenous societies react with the surrounding environments.

The book itself is divided into two subsequent sections. The first one is entitled *Circulations: Mobility, Subsistence and the Environment*. It contains four chapters that deal with a myriad of contexts and topics, including the complexity of plant nomenclature within the Huaorani, (Chapter 2) Nahua practices of leaving villages after the death of a family member, (Chapter 3) as well as the ‘de-agrarianisation’ and resulting shifts in the rural to urban migrations within Amazonia (Chapter 4). The second section, *Transformations: Knowledge, Identity, Place-Making and the Domestication of Nature*, is far lengthier and covers topics such as the placing of medicinal plants within Ese Eja society, (Chapter 10) diffusion of the peach palm, an Amazonian plant, by migrating populations and its subsequent domestication, (Chapter 6) and how basketry became a marker of identity and cultural revival for the Kaiabi after a government ordained relocation (Chapter 11).

One of the great strengths of *Mobility and migration* is the amount of ethnographic detail it provides for a large number of indigenous communities in Amazonia. It is this comprehensive information that makes the book a valuable read for anthropologists,

especially those unfamiliar with the Amazon region or looking to increase their knowledge of Amazonian society. Brief and succinct, each chapter provides a snapshot of a new context and a new reality; thus presenting a new ethnoecological perspective on life in Amazonia. Frequently occurring maps outline geographical locations, and delineate migration patterns, giving a sense of space and movement, two important themes within the book. While the ethnographic aspect of the book serves as its strength, this is not the case for some of its more natural science oriented content. The interdisciplinary nature of the writings has already been mentioned, and for readers unfamiliar with the terminology peculiar to each discipline, this can prove taxing as much of the content displays strong leanings towards biology and botany.

A further strength of the book is its use of a range of methodologies, which stem from the diverse disciplinary backgrounds of the contributors. Studies in the volume use participant observation, interviews, historical analysis and ecological landscaping to form a rich and informed picture of Amazonia. Local and regional perspectives on the interaction between migration and the natural environment help develop a layered understanding of issues such as climate change, migration and economic development in the global context (Meyerson 2007; Sanderson 2009). Most importantly, this book serves its main aim to challenge the idea of ‘spatial stasis’, becoming instead a collection of vivid and complex analyses that link the myriad ways in which indigenous populations interact with, and duly shape, the environment and nature.

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BOOK REVIEW

Lokensgard, Kenneth Hayes. 2010. *Blackfoot religion and the consequences of cultural commoditization*. Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate publishing.

Reviewed by

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/beeler2012.pdf>

In the ethnography *Blackfoot religion and the consequences of cultural commoditization*, independent scholar Kenneth Hayes Lokensgard provides insight into contemporary Blackfoot Religion and the exchange of medicine bundles as commodities and gifts across historical and cultural perspectives. Lokensgard engages the reader on points of Blackfoot Religion as a living religion, consequences and impact of the commodification and exchange of indigenous knowledge and religious artefacts, and Blackfoot medicine bundles interpreted with theoretical underpinnings of religion, commodity exchange, gift exchange and personhood. Lokensgard employs critical phenomenology, drawing attention to inequalities between conflicting social paradigms of the Native Americans and Euro-Americans and the impact of these conflicts on the indigenous way of life. Additionally, he uses a reflexive phenomenology to acknowledge his position and views as a Euro-American in this study of indigenous cosmology. As a result, he posits an in-depth comparison between the Blackfoot Traditionalists, Euro-Americans, scholars and collectors in their dialectical perceptions and behaviours towards medicine bundles. The ethnography takes place over 15 years amongst Blackfoot Indian Traditionalists living throughout Northern Montana and Southern Canada as well as non-Indian informants.

Comprised of six chapters, the first chapter outlines methods and theories used and individuals involved. Marx's theory of commodity exchange and Mauss's theory of gift

exchange along with key literature surrounding these topics are outlined as the framework to be analysed. He suggests that the relevance of these theories of commodity and gift allows for distinguishing the social organisation and religious orientation between indigenous and modern cultures; whereas bundles in the Euro-American context are perceived as commodities, in the context of Blackfoot religion they are treated as gifts. Chapter two and three provide an analysis of the key theories in this ethnography. Lokensgard's analysis of Marx's commodity theory illustrates the life process of exchange and how through exchange and appropriation by Euro-Americans the bundles have been collected as symbolic objects and aggregating monetary value. In his analysis of Mauss's theory on gift exchange Lokensgard relates the bundles against the three primary obligations required to be classified as a gift. Medicine bundles are accorded personhood, they are social actors participating in a gift economy and this participation suggests that gift exchange is in fact contributing to a society and its member's religious orientation. Lokensgard also lends a critical perspective to how scholars commoditise indigenous knowledge without concern for the accuracy of their interpretation, drawing on several historical works on the Blackfoot and providing overt criticism on the inaccurate portrayal of the medicine bundle exchange. He outlines three key problems; former works fail to detect the inherent value of medicine bundles as living beings in a continual relationship with their keeper, they misinterpret the money exchanged in the gifting of a bundle as a representation of symbolic value as opposed to a symbolic sacrifice by the new keeper and lastly, bundles are never property, they have religious value as embodied beings and the source of all life, or *ihtsipaitapiyo'pa*, 'The primary value of the medicine bundles derives from their personhood' (p. 57), not in the value achieved through the exchange.

The subsequent two chapters provide first-hand accounts of Blackfoot Traditionalists explaining how bundles are circulated as gifts alongside a discussion of Blackfoot ontology. The beings, *inatsapiiksi*, that make up a bundle are objects derived from the animate landscape, *nitsisskowa*, granted personhood by the touch of the sun. Relations forged with the bundles as cosmic gifts reinforce the relationship between the cosmos and the people. Chapter five is an account of how bundles have been diachronically commoditised by Blackfoot and Euro-American people. Through commoditization bundles have acquired a

monetary-value and in most instances exist within museum exhibitions and private collections. An attempt at repatriation by the Blackfoot Traditionalists is seen as an attempt to save spiritual and ceremonial knowledge from cultural imperialism. Lokensgard provides accounts of curators and private collectors exploring how they came to possess the bundles and their views on and resolutions to repatriation. This ethnography ends with a concluding chapter providing an overview of the ideas and concepts explored. With a phenomenological approach Lokensgard discerns in what ways the exchange of these other-than-human beings is vital to the social organisation and religious orientation of the Blackfoot. Previous scholarly works on bundles, Lokensgard suggests, were not deep enough and relied on mere observation combined with cultural bias to conclude the monetary value of bundles even among the Blackfeet. The value of the bundles does not lie in their objectification or commoditisation; it lies in the nature of bundles as spiritual gifts that create ‘Reciprocal relationships that allow the Blackfeet to live empowered and successful lives’ (p. 87).

Read this ethnography for its insightful approach to the commodity and gift exchange theories and in-depth account of Blackfoot religion and cosmology surrounding medicine bundles. Lokensgard adds to scholarly knowledge with in-depth accounts of medicine bundles and how they are valued in the Blackfoot religion. However, Lokensgard frequently fluctuates to criticising scholars for objectivizing research knowledge as a commodity. While he acknowledges his own participation in this process, he does not offer a solution and fails to reference a prevalent indigenous scholar, Vine Deloria Jr. who suggests; ‘One way that scientists can materially assist Indian institutions is to offer to participate in some of their programs.’ (Deloria 1991: 466). Although he attempts to remain reflexive as a Euro-American, he is in fact separating himself from that identity throughout the ethnography in his tone and criticism of previous academics in the field, suggesting at one point that scholarly work has by and large been a negative experience for indigenous populations, almost eliminating the recent years advances in social science research ethics. He leaves an implicit feeling that somehow his work has overcome all these ethical criticisms without an explicit reflexive resolution for future scholars.

References

Deloria, Vine, Jr. 1991. Research, redskins, and reality. *American Indian Quarterly*, 15(4): 457-468.

BOOK REVIEW

Goddard, Michael. 2011. *Out of place: Madness in the highlands of Papua New Guinea*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

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<http://www.dur.ac.uk/anthropologyjournal/vol18/iss2/fontefrancesco2012.pdf>

The sixth volume published in the series “Social Identities”, *Out of Place* introduces the reader into the experience of madness in Western Papua New Guinea (PNG). The book is based on anthropological fieldwork conducted in 1985–1986 among the Kakoli people, in the upper Kaugel Valley, Western Highlands Province. It is a study of how madness is perceived, lived and socially constructed in a community that, at the time of the research, “did not [...] have a concept of ‘mental illness’” (p.1), so as defined in Western medicine.

The term “mental illness” is defined on the basis of Western ideas a) of the human person as divided between body and mind; b) the localisation of the mind in the brain; and c) the explanation of madness as result of some brain dysfunction. The term used by Kakoli people to define madness is *kekelepa*, literally to be “out of place”. However, as Goddard explains, this word cannot be subsumed to psychiatric understanding of madness (p. 71). The word does not distinguish between permanent or short-term estrangement from the social, or between drunkenness and brain dysfunction: it expresses the incapacity of an individual to behave socially in proper manners. ‘To be *kekelepa*’ is an alteration of the individual’s thinking. However, what Kakoli people mean with ‘thinking’ and, consequently, ‘derangement’ cannot be explained in Western terms. First of all, for the Kakoli the place of thought is not the head of a person but her *numan*, “an invisible component of the person, located in the chest cavity” (p. 158). Moreover, in the Kakoli language, “to be

kekelepa” describes a disconnection of the individual’s *nimi* from the rest of her body. *Nimi* is the invisible self, the locus of the individual’s agency and personality, “an intangible component of the person which inheres in the soft tissue of the body, visible to others in a reflection or shadow, or a dream image” (p. 158), and the ‘primer’ of the individual’s thought. “To be *kekelepa*” thus is to have a *nimi* disorder, and the reasons of this disorder are found by the Kakoli people in the realm of the individual’s social life rather than her biology. In light of this social explanation of madness, Goddard’s ethnographic study of *kekelepa* is not a mere study of madness per se. Rather the author attempts “to reveal something of the Kakoli life-world phenomenological through description and considerations of how they represented and reacted to what they considered to be mad behaviour” (p. 10).

The book is divided in two parts. The first one, which includes the first and second chapters, “discuss[es] the theory and practices of psychiatry in relation to PNG, partly to illustrate the schism between Western ideas about madness and those to which Kakoli subscribed” (p. 11). Chapter 1 offers a detailed account of the history of psychiatry in PNG from early experimentations in the early 20th century to the present days. Through this description, Goddard suggests that the development of mental health service answered mostly to issues of social control and police rather than mental health and welfare. Chapter 2 investigates the discrepancy between theory and practice of psychiatry in PNG. Despite the theoretical discourse on psychiatry stresses “a ‘transcultural’ dimension of mental health and implied the possibility of psychiatry being applied with cultural sensitivity” (p. 72), the case-study of the implementation of psychiatry in Kaugel Valley’s health system confirms the thesis already pointed out in the first chapter; namely, that “[the] social control function of psychiatry predominates over its theoretical presentation as mental health service.” (p. 71)

The second part, which includes the remaining four chapters, focuses on the Kakoli and describes the place and culture of this community, presenting different cases of people who were considered ‘to be *kekelepa*.’ Chapter 3 presents the history and sociality of Kakoli community. In particular, the author outlines the ways in which *kekelepa* is understood and

identified by framing it in the group's everyday praxis. The following chapters discuss four cases of people considered to be *kekelepa*. Chapter 4 presents two episodes, the stories of Kapiye and Wanpis, in which madness is attributed to the affliction by supernatural beings, such as the *nami* of Kapiye's dead mother and a *Kuruwalu*, a folk character roughly describable as a wild-man. Through the description of these cases and presenting Kakoli' discourse about them and the causes of their madness, Goddard points out the extent to which these public diagnoses turn to constitute a broader discussion about the community, its values and engagement with the effects of colonialism. In chapter 5, the narration of the story of Lopa, a fifty years old man affected by what Kakoli considered an inevitable seasonal madness, shows how madness is a dialectic social construction. Lopa's madness appears the result of "communal anticipations, reactions and recollection and the response and reaction of the individual" (p. 110). The vicissitude of Lopa, moreover, shed light on the ambivalent use of psychiatry within the community and local authorities to restrain *kekelepa* persons. Finally, chapter 6 is the story of Hari, the 'mad giant': a man defined dangerously mad by the community. While this judgement did not match the author's direct experience of the character and behaviour of Hari, the biography of this *kekelepa* man tells about the ways in which the story and peculiarities of an individual that diverge from the social norm are exaggerated and accommodated by the community to create a living moral example.

As conclusive remarks, *Out of place* is a rich ethnographic account about the social nature of madness. In so doing, it contributes to the debate on mental illness in Melanesian anthropology. Moreover, while the stories of the four *kekelepa* men represent an effective example of ethnographic work and reflexive analysis, the book is also a valuable starting point for the study of the history and social issues of PNG.



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